



Team Leadership

About this Topic: Team Leadership



Topic Mentor

Linda A. Hill

From her more than 20 years of extensive field work, Professor Linda A. Hill has helped managers create the conditions for effective management in today's flatter and increasingly diverse organizations. A professor and chair of the Leadership Initiative at Harvard Business School, she is also the author of the best-selling *Becoming a Manager* (Harvard Business School Press), now out in paperback. Linda served as the content expert for *Coaching for Results* and *Managing Direct Reports*, two award-winning interactive programs from Harvard Business School Publishing, and also served as a mentor for many Harvard ManageMentor topics.

Donna D. Conlin, M.Ed.

Donna D. Conlin, M.Ed., is Senior Organization Effectiveness Strategist at Bose Corporation. She has 20 years of human resources development experience in a variety of business environments from entrepreneurial start-ups to established corporations, all experiencing significant change in their markets and technologies. She has worked extensively in the development of high-performing engineering and manufacturing teams. One of her recent projects produced the design and implementation of a team-on-team expertise network structure for product marketing. Her teaching experience includes the design and implementation of seminars on team leadership across worldwide operations.

Topic Source Notes

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What Would You Do?

What Would You Do?

Matthew has worked hard to recruit a talented staff for the Kinzo Account. As incentives, he offers sizeable salaries and strong benefits packages. He had the office space redecorated and threw an expensive kickoff meeting so everyone could get to know each other. They are now one month into the project. Matthew is frustrated because, despite all his efforts, the group is not functioning as a cohesive team. Meetings lack collaboration—he sees none of the excitement, camaraderie, or exchange of ideas that he has experienced with other teams. He knows that he has the right ingredients for a successful team; all he needs is a recipe for how to mix them.

What would you do?

Fortunately, Matthew has many choices for getting the team back on track. These choices apply to all sorts of teams. He could lead a discussion that revisits the purpose and objectives of the team. As the team leader, it's his job to set direction, establish clear expectations, and provide feedback. He could create a short-term goal for the team to focus on, inspiring collaboration among the group. He could also invite colleagues from different parts of the organization to share their perspectives about the team project with the team. If all else fails, he could change the composition of the team by selecting new members with strong collaborative skills.

In this topic, you'll learn how to establish a team, become an effective team leader, handle team problems, and evaluate performance.

How can you keep your team on track and inspired? You have many options for fostering creativity on your team.

Topic Objectives

This topic helps you:

- Evaluate whether you should establish a team
- Form a productive team
- Launch a team effort effectively
- Lead your team skillfully
- Assess your team's performance

Work groups versus teams



Types of teams

Organizations form different types of teams for different purposes.

Types of Teams

Team Type	Purpose	Example
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Self-directed work team	Meets on an ongoing, daily basis to perform a whole work process	At a steel mill, a team of eight people is responsible for ensuring that raw materials are purchased correctly according to company guidelines.
Project team	Gathers to address a specific problem or opportunity and then disbands	Several unit leaders in a medical-services firm explore the potential benefits of adopting a radical new imaging technology, present their findings to executives, and disband.
Virtual team	Brings geographically separate individuals together around specific tasks	A project manager for an engineering company hires consultants from around the world to work with staff engineers on a major client project.
Quality circle	Works on specific quality, productivity, and service problems	Customer-service employees and managers in a consumer-goods manufacturer generate and implement ideas for improving service to the company's biggest customers.

Team sponsors

Many teams are supported by a **team sponsor**—a manager or executive who "champions" the project. This person endorses the project's goals and is committed to seeing the project delivered on time, within budget, and at the optimum level of quality while satisfying project specifications. A team sponsor:

- Has a stake in the outcome and is accountable for the team's performance
- Has the authority to define the scope of the work, provide necessary resources, and approve or reject team output
- Is committed to the team's success
- Acts as the team's patron—providing resources, protecting the team against internal saboteurs, encouraging the team, and promoting the effort's value to higher management

Consider this example of a team sponsor:

As director of a community development organization, Mel had concerns about the quality and consistency of the press releases and newspaper reports that described the organization's activities and views. He knew the organization needed a consistent, unified communications strategy. At Mel's urging, several people volunteered to form a communications team. They selected a team leader and developed and executed a communications strategy.

Key Idea: Team leaders

Key Idea

A **team leader** communicates team status and participates in project management activities with team members. In contrast to a team sponsor, the leader fosters the team's development. In many respects, a leader's role resembles that of a manager. Both do the following:

- Keep the vision clear
- Provide a framework for the team's activities
- Coordinate activities
- Represent the team to others
- Negotiate with the team sponsor
- Identify needed resources
- Set milestones
- Mediate conflicts
- Ensure that everyone contributes to and benefits from the team effort and
- Keep work on track

But this is where the similarity between team leader and manager ends. Unlike managers, team leaders do **not** assume the role of final directors and schedulers of others' work. The team leader cannot act like the "boss" and still obtain the benefits of the team.

What is the role of a team leader? And how does that role differ from that of a manager?

Three roles of team leaders

Rather than functioning as a "boss," the team leader adopts three roles:

- **Initiator** of processes that promote team development and performance
- **Model** of desired behaviors
- **Coach** who helps team members improve performance

The leader must also pitch in as a working member of the team.

What kind of person can do most, or all, of these things? A team leader needs the following qualities and talents:

- An ability to set a direction that others will follow
- Good communication skills
- An ability to give and accept feedback
- High standards of performance
- A positive attitude toward team-based work
- Experience with team-based work

Leadership Insight: Transparency

When I was first promoted to lead my team, it was really clear that we were leading into one of the most dramatic financial crises most of us had ever seen.

People were nervous, and they were concerned and afraid. I think that we all knew that layoffs were coming. Our entire group was being reorganized. We had all new leaders. Almost every single thing had changed for everybody. There was a lot of uncertainty.

I came in one day and I looked around and I just realized that if I didn't step up and do something, most of these people would not be there soon. I think they weren't going to leave tomorrow in this type of job environment. But as soon as things got better, our best people would not be there anymore. They'd find other jobs.

So, I needed to make the transition from manager to a leader. It can be hard to do. One of the things that I saw that I could do immediately was offer people more transparency in regards to what was going on around them. People weren't getting the information that they needed really to even do their jobs.

One of the things I was able to do that really helped enormously in pulling my group together was to assemble people — allow them to be together more often so that I could give them the information that they needed. I provided a much higher level of transparency.

Even if there was bad news, they wanted to hear it — and they really appreciated knowing what was going on. I think it made a big impact and a very big difference. Now, months later when things are much better, we are a cohesive team. Everyone is still here, and I think they will be down the road.

What I learned in that case was that offering people a higher level of transparency and more communication, particularly in a time of great crisis and change, made all the difference in keeping people engaged from day to day and keeping them in the moment so that they could contribute and do their job. It seemed to mean a lot to the people in my group.

During tough times, being honest with your team builds their commitment to the organization.

Jacqueline Murphy
Editorial Director, Harvard Business Review Group

Jacqueline Murphy is Editorial Director at Harvard Business Review Press. Established in 1984, Harvard Business Review Press is one of the preeminent business book publishers in the world.

Previously, Jacqueline held senior editorial positions at Harvard Business Press, The Perseus Books Group, John Wiley & Sons, and Bloomberg Press.

Benefits and costs

When teams work well, they generate valuable benefits for their companies. These include:

- Creative solutions to problems
- Improved communication and collaboration throughout the enterprise
- A motivating, collegial work environment
- Enhanced organizational performance
- Effective sharing of information across the company

But teams have costs as well. For example:

- Setting up a team with the right components of leadership, resources, and personnel takes time and requires care and skill.
- Team effort and collaboration demand continual tending.
- There's a risk that team members won't join together around a common goal, or that personal differences or self-interest will undermine the collaboration needed for success.

Clearly, a team venture is always—to some extent—an experiment; success is not preordained.

Reasons to set up a team

Are you thinking of leading a team? Or has an executive or manager in your company asked you whether you believe your organization would benefit from setting up a particular team? To determine whether a team is the right way to go, ask yourself three questions:

1. **How complex is the task involved?** High task complexity often lends itself to team-based work. Why? Because no one person has exactly the right combination of knowledge, expertise, and perspective needed to handle the entire job. Complexity stems from several things, including:
 - The need to process large volumes of information
 - High uncertainty
 - Numerous subtasks, each requiring specialized skills or knowledge
 - The absence of a standardized procedure for completing the task
2. **How interdependent are the different components of the task?** The greater the interdependence of task components, the greater the likelihood that a team is the right way to go. That's because, with an interdependent task, the work can be completed only if multiple individuals collaborate together.

Consider this example of task interdependence:

Developing the interior of a new vehicle is highly interdependent work. Electrical engineers must coordinate with ergonomics experts to identify the best locations for lighting and electrical features. And seat designers need to draw on the expertise of materials specialists to ensure durability, safety, and comfort.

3. **How unique is the challenge at hand?** If you've identified a nonroutine task of limited duration, a project team may be the best way to address the challenge. The team focuses on the challenge for the specified time span, then disbands. (But note that unique challenges aren't the only criterion for establishing a team: Self-directed work teams are useful in handling recurring challenges, such as meeting production quotas.)

Consider a task or challenge facing your company. How would you answer the three questions above? Is the task complex, interdependent, and unique? If so, a team may be the right approach to use—as long as you match the right team to the challenge at hand.

Key Idea: Steps in brief

Key Idea

To ensure your team carries out its mission effectively, productively, and creatively, take these seven steps:

- Recruit team members with the competencies you need
- Define a clear goal and ensure team members share it
- Define success by describing the goal in terms of performance metrics
- Foster commitment to achieving the level of performance required
- Ensure that every member of the team both contributes to and benefits from the team effort
- Cultivate a supportive environment and
- Align behavior of team members through rewards such as compensation

Your business relies on the creativity and performance of your teams. How can you be sure they reach their goals?

Recruit team members

In effective teams, members possess the talent, knowledge, and experience needed to get the job done. If a particular competency is missing among the members, or if one or more individuals have weaknesses that could threaten the team's performance, recruit for the missing competencies or identify ways to strengthen those weaknesses.

Define a clear, common goal



Members of a successful team can articulate a clear, shared purpose—in a concise way. Test for a clear, common goal with the elevator speech test. Take each team member aside and ask: "If you were traveling by elevator with our chief executive officer and she asked you what your team was working on, what would you say?" Here are two team goals that would pass the elevator speech test:

- "We are redesigning our Web site with three objectives in mind: to make it capable of accommodating each of our different product groups, to make site updating and expansion faster and less costly, and to enhance the customer experience."
- "Our team is reengineering the entire customer service process. If we are successful, 95% of incoming customer calls will be handled by a single service representative, and 80% of all calls will be resolved in three minutes or less."

Define metrics for the goal

Help your team specify its goal in terms of performance metrics. A good performance metric expresses how team members will know if they have achieved the team's goal and the time frame in which each objective will be achieved.

The phrase "80% of all calls will be resolved in three minutes or less" is an effective metric.

Here is another example. Suppose your team's charter is "Develop a Web site capable of providing fast, accurate, cost-effective product information and fulfillment to customers." That's an ambitious goal—but what does "fast" mean, exactly? And how should accuracy be defined? To ensure that your team knows when it has fulfilled its charter, your team could change its charter to "Develop a Web site capable of providing cost-effective product information and fulfillment to customers with an accuracy rate of 1 error for every 1,000 transactions."

Also consider setting up performance metrics for interim milestones that team members can strive to achieve on their way to the larger objective.

For example:

- "Within 6 months, 50% of incoming customer calls will be handled by a single representative."
- "Within 9 months, 75% of incoming calls will be handled by a single representative."
- "Within 12 months, 95% of incoming calls will be handled by a single representative."

Foster commitment to success

In successful teams, members are committed to the goal. They feel motivated to do the necessary work and forge ahead even when the going gets tough. How can you tell if the members of your team are committed to the goal? They use language emphasizing the communal effort, such as, "*We* are making good progress, but each of *us* needs to pick up the pace" or "Where do *we* stand with respect to *our* schedule?"

Commitment to a shared goal occurs more easily in small teams. Some team experts, therefore, recommend that teams have no more than ten members—and even fewer if the members demonstrate all the required competencies.

You can also enhance commitment through rewards. If team members understand that promotions, bonuses, or other rewards will come with their success in achieving the team goal, their commitment will intensify.

Leadership Insight: Do actions speak louder than words?

There's an old adage that says that actions speak louder than words. And while I think there's a great deal of truth to that, I also don't think it's universally true. I think there are times for action, and there are times when words are actually more powerful than action. I want to bring this to life by talking about two experiences I had as a younger manager.

In the first case, I was taking over as leader of a team that was really suffering from some serious morale problems. These were owing to the rather combative nature of the previous manager, who had a nasty habit of pitting people against each other within the team and also pitting the team against the internal customers within the organization that the team served.

I knew in the long run that the biggest problem the team faced was with the relationships to the customers, but I made my initial focus trying to rebuild the esprit de corps within the team itself. My feeling was that without enthusiasm and commitment inside the team, we'd never be able to really successfully reengage with customers.

About two weeks before my official start date, I gathered the team for a lunch. During the lunch I asked them to describe for me the current situation, how things were going.

I heard what I expected to hear. On the one hand, a depressing tale; but on the other hand, I got the sense of a group of really bright, committed people who wanted to do good work but were frustrated by the lack of opportunity to do that work.

After I listened for a while, I leaned forward, and I said something along the lines of, "This is all about to change."

I got a few eye rolls, a few dubious looks, but I [soldiered] on to describe my vision for the role that the team could play within the organization, how we would really work together as a team, and then how we would go about rebuilding our relationships with our customers.

A few months later, one of the more pessimistic members of the team and I were talking about that lunch. He said to me, "You know, I didn't really totally buy what you were selling, but at least you sounded believable."

At a time when this team really needed something to believe in, my ability to sound believable was the most powerful thing I could do. Here's a case where I firmly believe that words were the most powerful tool I had in my arsenal.

But I want to contrast this with another situation. Again, I was entering as a new manager, into a team that was suffering from some pretty low morale. But this time, morale wasn't coming from the previous manager but from the lack of process, or rather the chaotic way that this team went about doing their work.

In this case, I knew that action was needed, and the first thing I did was I tossed out what amounted to the old way of doing things, full of its inefficiencies, and I implemented an incredibly simple new work flow, not because I thought it was the ultimate answer, but it was a way to create a new baseline, give the team a fresh start.

The second thing I did was I signed on for the team's 5:00 a.m. shift. This was a team that worked in shifts throughout a 16-hour day. I did this for a couple of reasons. One, I wanted to experience for myself the work of the team so I could really add value to creating new processes and new ways of doing things.

But even more importantly, I wanted to demonstrate the level of commitment that I had to making things better. At a time when action was really needed, I wanted to be seen as a person of action.

When you see these two cases, you see one case where action was clearly the way to go, and another where words were more powerful. I think while we have the inclination, a lot of us, to jump to action, managers should really step back, look at a situation, and decide whether it's action they need or words.

There are times for action, and there are times when words are more powerful than actions.

Paul Michelman

Executive Editor and Director of New Products, Harvard Business Review Group

Paul Michelman is the Executive Editor and Director of New Products for Harvard Business Review Group, where he leads HBR's innovation efforts, including mobile, social media, e-reading, and new digital formats.

In his seven-year tenure with Harvard Business Publishing, Paul has also served as a Founding Editor and Director of Content for HBR.org, Executive Editor for Harvard Business Press, and Editor of Harvard Management Update.

Before joining Harvard Business Publishing, Paul was director of programming and production for Captivate Network and served in editorial leadership roles at MIT Sloan School of Management and Harvard Business School.

He holds a Bachelor of Science from Northwestern University and a master's degree from the Medill School of Journalism, also at Northwestern University.

Ensure all members contribute and benefit

For a team to succeed, all its members—including the leader—must contribute to and support the goal. Team members who simply show up at meetings to render their opinions but do no substantive work impair team performance and demoralize active team members.

And just as each member must contribute to the team effort, each must also receive clear benefits. These may include:

- The emotional or psychological satisfaction of doing interesting, stimulating, and meaningful work
- A learning experience that will pay future career dividends
- A bonus or pay raise
- A title change through a promotion
- Public recognition and credit that will position the team member for more interesting and rewarding work in the future

Cultivate a supportive environment

All teams depend on larger groups, departments, divisions, and their entire organization for resources, information, and assistance. If these surrounding entities are supportive, the team stands a better chance of success. If they're indifferent or hostile to the team and its goals, team effectiveness may suffer.

Here's how to create a supportive environment for your team:

- **Provide team protection:** Protect your team from powerful managers and departments that, for whatever reason, don't back the team's effort.
- **Maintain a nonhierarchical structure:** Resist any urge to force your team members to conform to a rigid hierarchical structure. They'll be more willing to share information and collaborate across the company and will also feel a greater sense of empowerment if they are not constrained by stiff reporting structures.
- **Encourage experience with team-based work:** Facilitate team-based work whenever possible in your organization. Experience with such work generates insights into what works, how best to organize around a goal, and how to collaborate. Suggest that your company also provide training on team skills, such as listening, communicating with different kinds of people, and staying focused on common objectives.

Align behavior through rewards

In an aligned organization, everyone understands the enterprise's objectives and how his or her own operating unit or team supports that high-level objective. Everyone works in the same direction, toward the same end.

In an aligned team, the team goals support the organization's goals, and each member's goals align—through the team—with those high-level objectives. Equally important, rewards support this alignment.

For example, because the team's sponsor is accountable for its success, at least part of his or her compensation should be linked to that performance.

Compensation of the team leader and individual members should likewise be influenced by team outcomes.

The figure below illustrates alignment in graphic terms.

Consider different selection methods



The heart of any team is its members. While a good sponsor can clear the way and secure resources, and you, as the leader, can motivate performance and keep people focused, team members are the ones who will do most of the work. For that reason, you need to bring together the right people with the right skills.

A team can gather its members in one or more of the following ways:

- **Assignment:** The sponsor or leader selects members and invites them to participate.
- **Volunteering:** Individuals who feel highly invested or interested in the work step forward and offer to become members.
- **Nomination:** People with an interest in the project nominate individuals who have the right skills and in whom they have confidence.

None of these selection methods is inherently better than the others. Each is a valid approach for identifying the right members for a team. And each method can also result in poor selections, especially if your company is highly politicized.

Review motivations for selection

To determine whether a team member is a good addition to a team, look at the motivations of the people involved in the selection.

In the three following examples, wrong motivations will hobble team performance:

- You'll be leading a new Web site design team, and the team's sponsor has **assigned** most of the members. Among them is Hugh, the sponsor's right-hand man. Hugh has little knowledge of Web site design, but the sponsor has asked him to report back on two other members whom the sponsor mistrusts. Once the other team members discover Hugh's role as informant, team morale suffers.
- You're assembling a team whose mission is to reengineer your company's order-fulfillment team. Sally **volunteers** because she believes that her status in the organization will suffer

if the team radically overhauls that process. Her motivation is self-protection, not the team's success. She'll likely have little value to add to the team.

- As you begin forming a team designed to analyze customer buying trends, Ralph **nominates** Muriel, one of his direct reports. "This will be a good learning experience for her," he tells himself. Muriel's participation on the team might well further her professional development—but you'll need to ask yourself whether she's a good addition to the team.

For all these reasons, take care to select members of your team based on one criterion: successful achievement of team goals. That means choosing people who bring the right mix of skills to the team.

Look for the right skill sets

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.”
–Stephen Covey

To select team members with the right skills, take these steps:

1. Assess needed skills.

Look objectively at the task at hand and ask yourself exactly which skills are needed to get it done. What results do you expect from the team effort? Which activities will produce those results? And what skills do those activities require? Skills come in numerous forms, including the following:

- **Technical skill:** expertise in specific areas, such as market research, finance, and software programming
- **Problem-solving skill:** ability to analyze difficult situations and craft solutions that others may not see
- **Interpersonal skill:** the capacity to work effectively with others
- **Organizational skill:** understanding the company's political and logistical landscape, and forming networks of contacts throughout the organization
- **Developmental skill:** the ability to master new skills as needed
- **Communication skill:** the ability to effectively and efficiently exchange information and listen to others

2. Identify people with the required skills.

Survey your organization. Identify the people who have the needed skills you've identified. Resist any tendency to focus too much on technical skill—a common mistake in organizations. The other, seemingly "softer," skills are equally important.

Be aware that you won't likely get all the skills you need for your team. Something will always be missing, because it's virtually impossible to anticipate every skill that will be required. Indeed, most teams figure out the skills they'll need *after* they are formed. For this reason, team members who can learn new skills quickly can serve a crucial role.

Activity: Pick the skills you need

You need people with certain skills to accomplish certain team goals. Practice identifying which skills are needed to meet team goals.

Your manager has analyzed a current business problem and devised a solution that requires you to restructure your department. She has asked you to create a team to evaluate how employees in the department can be redeployed in order to implement new business processes. Your team must then communicate the new structure to the department and, if necessary, ease people into their new roles.

Which of the following skills are *not* essential?

- ☐ Technical skills

Correct choice. Your team's project does not appear to require expertise in any particular technical area.

- ☐ Problem-solving skills

Not the best choice. Your team needs to evaluate how employees in the department will be redeployed to support the new business processes. This will involve identifying task requirements and matching those requirements with employees' skills, experience, and interests.

- ☐ Interpersonal skills

Not the best choice. One of your team's duties is to work with employees individually to help them adjust to the new departmental structure on a one-on-one basis. Interpersonal skills will be essential for this.

- ☐ Organizational skills

Not the best choice. Participants in a restructuring effort need to understand the organization's political and logistical landscape to match employees to new job roles.

- ☐ Communication skills

Not the best choice. Part of your team's mission is to communicate the new departmental structure to the staff.

New programming software has been released that promises to revolutionize your industry. Your manager has asked you to form a team to quickly master this new software and suggest ways it can be used to improve shortcomings in the company's current business processes.

Which of the following skills are *not* essential?

- ☐ Technical skills

Not the best choice. Your team will need people with solid programming knowledge and skills.

- ☐ Problem-solving skills

Not the best choice. Your team needs to identify problems in your current business processes and conceive of ways in which the new software might solve these problems.

- ☐ Organizational skills

Correct choice. Nothing in the project calls for changes in structure or organization.

- ☐ Developmental skills

Not the best choice. Your employees will have to sharpen their programming skills in order to use the new software.

Review assignments over time

Once you've made your initial selection of team members, be prepared to add new members and possibly remove members from your team once the project begins. Over time, you may find that new skills and team members become necessary as the work changes and the team makes progress toward its goal.

But before you change team membership, keep this caution in mind: Over time, team members develop effective patterns for making decisions and communicating. They identify themselves as a group. This cohesion is undermined when too many people join and exit the team. Those who remain must spend valuable time orienting the new members and learning how to work with them; they must spend still more time finding ways to fill in for departed team members. So do your best to minimize turnover.

Key Idea: Define the team charter

Key Idea

A team charter is a concise written document that spells out the nature of the work and your expectations for the results. A good team charter contains some or all of the following:

- How team members' roles and responsibilities are defined
- How the team's work relates to unit and company goals
- When the work is expected to be finished
- What exactly the team will deliver
- How the team will measure success
- How the project will benefit the company
- Which resources will be available to the team
- What kind of decisions the team will have the authority to make
- What major milestones the team will aim for while progressing toward its goal
- What major risks are associated with the team's effort, and how they'll be addressed

Once your team's charter is established and the team is organized, the team can figure out how to achieve its goals. This requires the creation of a **project plan**. A project plan is especially useful for large, complex endeavors. It provides more details about tasks, milestones, deliverables, risks, and timetables. The project plan serves as a road map, both for the team and other interested parties.

Once you've picked the right team for the job, you need to give that team direction. What is the best way to do that?

Host a launch meeting



A launch meeting enables everyone involved in the team—members, the leader, the sponsor—to meet face-to-face and get to know one another at a personal level before jumping into the project work. This gathering builds commitment and bolsters participants' sense that the team and project are important. Even virtual teams—those with geographically dispersed members—should try to hold a face-to-face launch meeting.

A good launch meeting:

- Clarifies who belongs to the team—including core members and peripheral members who may participate for a limited time—and welcomes all to the effort
- Ensures that everyone understands and agrees on the team charter, the project goal, deliverables, and so on
- Reiterates how the team's goals fit with the unit and company's larger objectives—making participants feel they are part of something with important consequences for themselves and the organization
- Clarifies the resources available to the team and the non-team personnel (other employees, suppliers, customers) with whom members will likely interact
- Describes the team incentives. Aside from normal compensation, what will team members receive if their team goals are met or exceeded?
- Enables participants to introduce themselves, describe their backgrounds and expertise, and explain what they hope to contribute to the effort

The best launch meetings leave people with a clear sense of direction and strong feelings of commitment.

Select a decision-making method

For many teams, the sponsor has decision-making authority over matters such as specific budget expenditures, the use of outside resources, and choices affecting customers.

By contrast, teams have sole authority over decisions related to team operations and processes—for instance, "Which alternative new product design should we select?" "Which activities should we cut to stay within budget?" or "Which consultant should we hire?"

To avoid misunderstandings about decision-making authority, help your team agree on *who* will make such decisions and *how* decision making will unfold.

Approaches to Decision-Making

Decision-Making Method	How It Works
Majority rule	Members provide input, discuss the decision, then vote. The choice receiving more than 50% of the votes is adopted.
Consensus	Every member must agree to adopt a decision. If consensus is impossible, new alternatives are developed and presented for evaluation.
Small group	A subset of individuals with relevant experience and skills makes specific decisions.
Leader with input	The team leader gathers input from members and uses it to make decisions.

To select a decision-making method, weigh the trade-offs. Consensus and majority rule, for example, foster feelings of involvement and commitment—but take more time than other methods.

Activity: Pick the right method

Many factors go into determining the right decision-making method for your team, including its size, its composition, and its goals. Which decision-making method works best for these situations?

Because of your experience managing projects, you have been chosen to lead a new project team. The team consists of ten people: seven smart, but relatively inexperienced, information technology professionals and three highly experienced network administrators. The team is charged with overhauling the company's information technology structure. What decision-making method would be best for this group and project?

☐ Majority rule

Not the best choice. The majority of team members are smart but new at their professions. Majority rule is more credible when individuals are equally experienced.

- ☐ Consensus

Not the best choice. Your team is relatively large and has people with varying years of experience and areas of functional expertise. It is unrealistic to expect or require the entire team to agree on every decision.

- ☐ Small group

Correct choice. The three network administrators, both because of their relevant knowledge and their small number, will likely be more effective at making major decisions about the team's work. Their group is large enough to produce some healthy diversity of opinion between them that they'll have to reconcile, but small enough to form a logical organizational unit.

- ☐ Leader with input

Not the best choice. Although you are the project manager, other team members can offer more technical knowledge relevant to the project's goal.

Your company is experiencing financial difficulties. Senior executives have asked you and two other managers to decide which employees will have to be let go first in case layoffs become necessary. What is the best decision-making method for this difficult and sensitive assignment?

- ☐ Majority rule

Not the best choice. In a group of three, a majority decision would mean two against one. When making important, career-affecting decisions in a small team of equals, it is better to pursue discussion until you can all agree. This prevents internal resentments from forming and allows the team to present a consistent message to management.

- ☐ Consensus

Correct choice. Your team is making decisions that could significantly impact dismissed employees' professional and personal lives. It is essential that you have general agreement on these decisions, so that you can present a consistent message to management (and employees, if the decisions are implemented). The team is also small enough to realistically reach consensus.

- ☐ Small group

Not the best choice. Your team is already very small; there isn't really a smaller group within your team to which you can defer.

- ☐ Leader with input

Not the best choice. You are in a small team with members of equal experience and seniority. Claiming the "final say" is likely to produce bad feelings within the group and produce a less defensible decision to present to senior management.

You are the senior sales representative for an industrial supply company. You have been asked to lead a team of twelve experienced sales representatives that is developing a departmental

strategy for the next fiscal year. Not only is each rep motivated and knowledgeable, but each is also highly opinionated, with unique ideas about the direction of the business. What is the best decision-making method for this situation?

☐ Majority rule

Not the best choice. In a group with a wide variety of different ideas, it may be difficult to find any plan or perspective on which there is more than 50% agreement.

☐ Consensus

Not the best choice. In a large group with substantial disagreements between people of similar knowledge and experience, consensus can be very difficult to form. If consensus is achieved, it may be on a watered-down, middle-of-the-road position that no member is truly enthusiastic about.

☐ Small group

Not the best choice. The members of your team have roughly equal seniority and expertise. Choosing a small group within the team to make decisions would be arbitrary and may lead to resentment. The other representatives could later create obstacles to implementing the strategy.

☐ Leader with input

Correct choice. If your team is working in an area where you have a great deal of knowledge, do not hesitate to have the final say. Take the divergent opinions of your team members, use your experience to weigh them, consult again with specific internal or external individuals if you have lingering questions, and then decide on the best path.

Facilitate collaboration

Real teams are created through joint work and idea sharing. To facilitate these activities, set up team workspaces in specific ways:

- **Team room:** Dedicate a special room to your team's project work, meetings, and informal gatherings. Place the physical artifacts and records of the team's work—competing products, prototypes, research reports, progress charts—in the room. Stock a refrigerator with food and beverages to draw people in. And cultivate an informal atmosphere with sofas, lounge chairs, and notepaper and pens for sketching ideas.
- **Ready access:** Assign team members to doorless offices and reduce the physical distance between offices as much as possible. In one team, the maximum walking distance between any two members was 50 feet.

Leadership Insight: Not another flow chart!

There are some things that you need to watch out for when you're trying to be a good leader and motivate your team. And in my opinion, that is thinking that everybody looks at the world

and views the world the same way that you do.

I recall back in my own career, early on, I had a manager who was an engineer by education and by practice, and so he was very analytical. And he used to love developing spreadsheets and flowcharts. That is the way he communicated his vision. That's the way he led his team.

And what he didn't realize is not everybody on his team was into spreadsheets and flowcharts, and not everybody connected with that as far as what our vision was for our team.

So, for me, the lesson there is you need to make sure that you're leading your team in a way that is conducive or receptive to every member. And it may mean different styles for different people.

It may be very appropriate to use spreadsheets for certain people, but other folks want to just sit and just talk about what the future might have in store. So it's really using different approaches based on who your team members are.

Understanding your team members' individual communication styles is key to creating a shared vision.

Jayne Johnson

Director of Learning and Leadership Development, General Electric Company

Jayne Johnson is the Director of Learning and Leadership Development at General Electric Company. GE is a high-tech infrastructure and services company with the benefit of a financial services engine.

Jayne joined GE's John F. Welch Center, also known as Crotonville, in 2004. She is responsible for the overall strategy of GE's comprehensive leadership curriculum, serving GE's top performing leaders from entry level through early executive.

Before assuming her current role, Jayne held various learning and development leadership roles within the company, beginning her career on the Information Management Leadership Program (IMLP), one of GE's renowned entry leadership programs.

Her expertise includes leadership development, executive assessments and coaching, employer of choice initiatives, and change management.

She is co-leader of the GE Women's Network Scholarship Fund, which offers financial and professional support to college women pursuing math, science, or technical degrees.

Clarify expectations

To encourage productive, team-based behavior, clarify your expectations about the following:

- **Attendance:** Your team can't make decisions and accomplish its work unless all members show up for meetings and joint work sessions.
- **Interruptions:** Suggest that members turn off cell phones during meetings and work sessions.
- **No sacred cows:** Agree that all issues are open to discussion—even uncomfortable ones.

- **Mutual support:** Discourage members from undermining one another's views through criticism, deception, or the withholding of relevant data.
- **Constructive criticism:** Insist that people vent any disagreements in constructive ways.
- **Confidentiality:** Assure members that discussions about sensitive issues will stay within the team, and then follow through on that promise.
- **Action orientation:** Make it clear that all discussions must end with action plans.

Each team's approach to its work will differ, but the above norms serve as basic guidelines for productive behavior.

Schedule the work

Scheduling your team's work is all about planning. That is, you specify the means by which members will generate the deliverables outlined in the team charter. Scheduling consists of two steps:

1. **Specifying tasks:** Identify all major tasks and subtasks that must be completed for the objectives to be met. The table below shows several examples of specified tasks for a team project involving moving Web servers and databases to a new data center.

TASK SPECIFICATION

Major Task	Level 1 Subtasks	Level 2 Subtasks	Days Required for Level 2 Subtasks
Obtain equipment	Purchase 3 servers and 2 databases.	Cut purchase order and submit to vendor.	5
	Ship equipment to new data center.	Alert data center that equipment is slated for arrival.	2
Test equipment	Test machines	Ensure network connectivity, database	2

		access, and functionality	
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2. **Assigning tasks:** Determine which team members are best able to handle each task, and then assign tasks accordingly. While assigning tasks, clarify how each one fits with the highest-level team goals, and how those team goals fit with the unit's and company's objectives. Also assign the authority and resources needed to complete each task.

Define success measures

To chart your team's progress toward its goals, work with your team to identify a set of performance metrics. These measures will depend largely on the specific work involved—but they need to reflect the achievement of clear milestones on the road to the team's goals.

For example, the project team charged with moving company Web servers and databases to a new data center might adopt the following success measures:

- "Complete the job in 18 days or less."
- "Provide 99% error-free service after switchover to the new system."
- "Stay within initial budget."

Make such measures challenging but achievable. If they seem too aggressive or unattainable, your team's morale may evaporate.

Develop a budget



Help your team create a budget showing how it expects to use the resources that have been made available for its work. The budget translates plans into measurable quantities that indicate the cost of required resources and any anticipated returns over the life of the project.

For most team projects, project costs fall in these common categories:

- **Personnel:** Include personnel costs only if team members' time is not donated by their departments or business units.
- **Outside help:** Include fees of consultants or other facilitators whom you anticipate needing.
- **Travel:** If you expect team members to travel to meeting sites, customer facilities, benchmarking locations, or other destinations, estimate the related costs in your budget.
- **Training:** Are you planning to provide workshops on the use of special software or other training to enable your team to fulfill its objectives? If so, include those costs in your budget.

- **Capital expenditures:** If they're not provided by your organization, estimate and include the cost of team computers, software, communications equipment, and so forth.
- **Research:** Do you anticipate purchasing studies or data to support the project? If so, at what cost?

Once you've laid the foundation for a culture of collaboration and established business basics, you're ready to unleash your team and let it do its assigned work.

Nurture team spirit



Once you've launched your team effort, it is critical to pay close attention to the ways in which your team interacts and gets work done. Despite all the hard work and planning that you invest up front, some team members may not work efficiently or collaborate well with others. You need to monitor team members' behavior and productivity, and you should intervene when necessary to ensure that the team reaches its goals.

Four practices—keeping an eye on team collaboration, improving information sharing, celebrating successes, and supporting team learning—can help you.

Ensure collaboration

“Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprung up.”
—Oliver Wendell Holmes

The quality of collaboration among your team's members will determine whether your team succeeds. In the table below, note symptoms of dysfunctional collaboration and signs of healthy collaboration.

Signs of Dysfunctional or Healthy Collaboration

Dysfunctional Collaboration	Healthy Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People put team

<p>keeps trying to do all the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Someone takes undue personal credit for the team's accomplishments.• A member is always pushing to get a larger share of the team's resources.• Someone is keeping his or her activities secret.	<p>interests above their own personal concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People share credit for successes, and put in extra hours on team projects.• Members give resources to teammates who can use them more effectively.• Team members don't let disagreements become personal.
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Activity: Diagnose collaboration

Distinct behaviors can tell you a lot about whether a team is collaborating in a healthy or dysfunctional way. Look at each of these team actions and diagnose the teams' way of collaborating.

A single team member puts in hours and hours of extra work on the project.

Is this situation an example of healthy or dysfunctional collaboration?

☐ Dysfunctional

Correct choice. If a single team member is working substantially more on a project than others, there may be something wrong with your collaborative or management processes.

☐ Healthy

Not the best choice. "Dysfunctional" is the correct choice. If a single team member is working substantially more on a project than others, there may be something wrong with your collaborative or management processes.

A team member prefers to not discuss the details of his work until he thinks it is "ready."

Is this situation an example of healthy or dysfunctional collaboration?

☐ Dysfunctional

Correct choice. Good team collaboration requires open communication among the team. This personality type may respond well to a scheduled weekly meeting at which the individual must present a progress report in written form. The written form and deadlines force the individual to define a weekly stage of "readiness," yet the interval between meetings allows time to complete and revise ideas to respond to the team's feedback.

☐ Healthy

Not the best choice. "Dysfunctional" is the correct choice. Good team collaboration requires open communication among the team. This personality type may respond well to a scheduled weekly meeting at which the individual must present a progress report in written form. The written form and deadlines force the individual to define a weekly stage of "readiness," yet the interval between meetings allows time to complete and revise ideas to respond to the team's feedback.

It is difficult to attribute credit for particular parts of the project to individual team members, who frequently discuss each other's work.

Is this situation an example of healthy or dysfunctional collaboration?

☐ Dysfunctional

Not the best choice. "Healthy" is the correct choice. In a truly collaborative environment, the exchange of ideas between team members may make it difficult to fully credit single team members for distinct parts of the project. Balance this ambiguity by using informal means to understand where individuals contribute most, so that you can reflect this in their annual performance evaluation.

☐ Healthy

Correct choice. In a truly collaborative environment, the exchange of ideas between team members may make it difficult to fully credit single team members for distinct parts of the project. Balance this ambiguity by using informal means to understand where individuals contribute most, so that you can reflect this in their annual performance evaluation.

At the start of the project, the team is extremely enthusiastic and sets very high goals for the project. By the end, however, it has run into unanticipated obstacles and does not meet the targets.

Is this situation an example of healthy or dysfunctional collaboration?

☐ Dysfunctional

Correct choice. Seemingly positive interactions can actually be dysfunctional; in this case, the team members let each other's energy distract them from what they could realistically achieve.

☐ Healthy

Not the best choice. "Dysfunctional" is the correct choice. Seemingly positive interactions can actually be dysfunctional; in this case, the team members let each other's energy distract them from what they could realistically achieve.

Individual team members use only what resources are strictly necessary for their work.

Is this situation an example of healthy or dysfunctional collaboration?

☐ Dysfunctional

Not the best choice. "Healthy" is the correct choice. Conservative use of resources by individuals shows a consideration for the team's overall needs. At the same time, when team members are developing ideas together, you don't want to limit their use of resources so much that it hampers the creativity that could lead to innovation on the project.

☐ Healthy

Correct choice. Conservative use of resources by individuals shows a consideration for the team's overall needs. At the same time, when team members are developing ideas together, you don't want to limit their use of resources so much that it hampers the creativity that could lead to innovation on the project.

Resolve conflict

Interpersonal conflict—whether in the form of jealousy, a power struggle, or simple dislike of one member for another—exerts the *most* destructive impact on a team's ability to collaborate in healthy ways. If you see this kind of problem arise, stop it immediately—through one of these methods:

- **Open team discussion:** Team members openly discuss behaviors they like, behaviors that cause problems, how people can behave differently, and what the team needs from each person to succeed. Members commit to changing their behavior based on that feedback.
- **Private channels:** A facilitator or team member charged with maintaining team relationships meets privately with the person exhibiting problem behavior. The facilitator describes the problem behavior, states its impact, offers an alternative behavior, and describes what will happen if the problem behavior continues.

With both approaches, be sure to follow up afterward to ensure that members have upheld their commitments to change their behavior.

Dysfunctional collaboration and interpersonal conflict are only two types of challenges that a team can encounter. Other difficulties include a weakening sense of direction, insufficient or unequal commitment to the team's performance, and hostility from other groups.

Remove barriers to information sharing

As with collaboration, the quality of information sharing is crucial to your team. A collaborative team will share information easily. But other departments may not readily provide information your team needs for several reasons:

- Someone in another part of the organization knows something that could help a member of your team but doesn't think to share the knowledge.

- A department has important information in a legacy database, but team members don't have easy access to the database because of the structure of the company's Information Technology system.
- An employee or manager in another department who is hostile to your team and its goals deliberately withholds needed information.

How to combat these problems? Consider recruiting members from departments that hold essential information needed by your team.

Celebrate successes

In launching your team, you broke down objectives into tasks and subtasks and scheduled the work. To keep team members' motivation and commitment high, treat key tasks as milestones and celebrate them as they're achieved. Celebrating small victories energizes members to attack the next task and fosters feelings of camaraderie. Here are just a few suggestions for these celebrations:

- A catered lunch in the team room paid for by the team sponsor
- A picnic and ball game at a local park
- A party at your home

The bigger the achievement, the bigger the celebration.

Accelerate learning

“ Good leadership consists in showing average people how to do the work of superior people. ”
—John D. Rockefeller

In any team, members need time to learn how to work together. That learning helps them develop the interpersonal coordination and new skills needed to operate effectively. With team learning, members come to know one another's strengths and weaknesses and anticipate each other's responses.

You can help accelerate team learning in these ways:

- Periodically ask your team, "What can we learn from what we just did?"
- Set up opportunities for members to experiment.
- Send the message that you're available to hear members' opinions and perceptions.
- Ask for all members' input on key issues.
- Admit your own mistakes to the team, and model learning from those mistakes.

One key way to encourage team learning is to set up a systematic method for evaluating your team's performance—so you can help your team make mid-course corrections based on those evaluations.

Key Idea: Measure results and process

Key Idea

To truly operate as a team and learn how to work effectively, your team must periodically evaluate its own performance and make any necessary mid-course corrections. As the team

leader, you help guide these evaluations—and ensure that the team is assessing appropriate aspects of its performance.

Some performance measures focus on **results**—for example, "improved customer satisfaction," "lower production costs," "enhanced product quality," or "faster delivery time." These measures are determined by the team's objectives.

Other performance measures focus on **team process**—the way in which the team is achieving its results. These include cultural qualities such as:

- Commitment to team work
- Level of individual participation and leadership
- Collaboration and information sharing
- Conflict resolution
- Credibility and trust
- Positive interpersonal relationships
- Willingness to make changes and take risks and
- Individual and team learning

Process-based performance measures also include:

- Oral and written communication within and on behalf of the team
- Planning and goal setting
- Win-win decision making
- Effective problem solving
- Adherence to agreed-upon processes and procedures
- Good project management (such as budgeting and scheduling)

Noting whether your team accomplished its goals is only the first step of evaluation. You should also check how *well* it accomplished those goals and how smoothly the team functioned.

Leadership Insight: Surviving Mt. Everest

In 1996, many climbers set out to climb Everest, the world's tallest mountain, as they do each spring. In May, in fact, is when many people are trying to reach the summit. And that year there was a very deadly day, a very tragic day where many people died; and of course John Krakauer wrote the famous book "Into Thin Air" about that incident; a horrible storm hit at night and climbers were on the mountain, high up on the mountain, far too late during the day.

The idea when you climb Everest is when you make the final summit push, you set out from Camp Four — the highest camp — around midnight, you climb through the night trying to get to the summit by noon or midday, and then you scurry back to the camp by nightfall.

And the idea is it's much easier to climb up at night. It's very dangerous to be climbing down at night. So, that's the plan, this sort of 18-hour climb going back and forth from Camp Four to the summit.

But on this day on May 10th of 1996, many climbers didn't reach the summit till mid-afternoon, some of them as late as 4:00 or even later. And so they find themselves climbing down in the

dark and then a blizzard hit. Five of them died, including two expedition leaders, Rob Hall and Scott Fischer, two of the world's great climbers.

And I have had the chance to not only read all the materials about this but also talk to David Breashears, who was leading another expedition that actually had turned around and gone back to base camp and then helped with the rescue on this night.

What we learn about that incident is that these teams fell into what's called the "sunk cost" trap — which is, you put so much time, money, and personal energy and resources trying to get to the summit and you're so close to the end. You should realize that, hey, your personal safety is in danger and cut your losses and turn around. But we're very bad at cutting our losses as human beings.

In fact, what we say is we don't want to waste all that prior investment that we've made. That's sunk cost. We want to sort of rationalize that — that was all worth it. And so we kind of poured good money after bad or poor good effort after bad and we keep going we get "summit fever," if you will.

We do this in all walks of life; as team leaders you have to protect against this. You have to make sure that you make people aware of this and that you encourage a dialogue around: Is it time to turn around? Is it time to cut our losses? And on those teams leaders were very dictatorial and didn't welcome that kind of discussion.

As it turned out, there were members who were worried that they should in fact turn around, but didn't feel comfortable expressing that. And as a result, the team plowed ahead and five of them died.

Clinging to an untenable goal can endanger your team – and your organization.

Michael Roberto
Professor, Bryant University

Michael Roberto is a preeminent authority on strategic decision making, senior management teams, and neutralizing hidden threats to organizations.

Professor Roberto has studied how interpersonal dynamics cause catastrophic organizational failures (such as the Columbia Space Shuttle accident and the 1996 Mount Everest tragedy) and how to structure decision-making processes for success.

He helps senior executives build the consensus that successful implementation of a strategy requires and uncover potential disasters before they destroy an organization's strategy.

His newest book, "Know What You Don't Know", helps business leaders find and prevent problems before they happen. In his previous book, "Why Great Leaders Don't Take Yes for an Answer: Managing for Conflict and Consensus," Professor Roberto shows how to manage the interpersonal dimensions of decision making — the social, political, and emotional aspects that so often determine success.

He is the Trustee Professor of Management at Bryant University. Professor Roberto served for six years on the faculty at Harvard Business School and has been a Visiting Associate Professor of Management at New York University's Stern School of Business.

Choose evaluation methods



Performance evaluation methods vary widely in complexity, cost, and time required. Consider using a more elaborate method if your team has an extensive mission that will exert a major impact on your company's overall performance. For teams with narrower missions, simpler methods are probably sufficient. Consider these different methods:

- **Original objectives:** Your team evaluates its performance against its original goals and schedules, with the understanding that schedules often change as surprises and new opportunities crop up.
- **Benchmarking:** Your team compares its performance against that of other, similar teams in the company if information is available and relevant to your team's work.
- **Outside observer:** An outside consultant observes the team and provides an objective evaluation. He or she might also benchmark your team's performance against that of similar teams.
- **Ongoing team discussions:** Members of your team engage in regular, informal discussions to assess their functioning. These discussions work especially well for short-duration project teams.
- **Project debriefing sessions:** After your team completes a project or major part of a project, members meet to identify what did and did not go well. They decide how to use their learning on future projects or parts of projects.

You can use any of these performance evaluation methods to reward success and identify points where corrections are needed.

Key Idea: Use rewards effectively

Key Idea

In rewarding successes after evaluating your team's performance, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Emphasize the group's performance, not individual accomplishments.
- Offer rewards at strategic milestones, not just at the very end of a project.
- Consider how you'll reward members who leave or join the team in midproject.

Also, don't assume that rewards must always take the form of money. Consider other, more creative forms of rewards, such as:

- Announcing team accomplishments at larger meetings in the company
- Asking team members to serve as consultants to other teams
- Placing notes in individual team members' personnel files
- Sending the team a handwritten note praising a task well done and
- Empowering the team with greater freedom and authority to make decisions

By carefully designing your reward system, you can motivate your team and boost its chances of success.

Your team deserves appropriate compensation for its hard work. But how do you assign rewards, and what kind of rewards should you use?

Measure individual performance

In addition to your team's overall performance, it's valuable to assess individual members' performance. Why? Each of your team's members serves in a number of roles, such as individual contributor, member of your team, and member of the larger organization. So it's helpful to evaluate each person's performance in each of those roles.

Here are some evaluation methods to consider:

- **Team leader review:** You evaluate each member's performance.
- **Management review:** Your supervisor evaluates individual and team performance.
- **Self-appraisal:** Each member rates his or her own performance.
- **Peer rating:** Team members assess each other's contributions.
- **Customer satisfaction rating:** Internal and external customers rate the team's and individual members' performance.

Each of these methods can shed only so much light on an individual's performance. By combining several of the methods, you and your team's members will gain a more complete picture of individual performance.

Behave like a team player



As a manager, you may frequently lead teams as well as participate in teams led by someone else. In either situation, you need to demonstrate the qualities of a good team player rather than an individual performer. When both team leaders and members behave like team players, the team's collective output becomes more than just the sum of each person's contribution. Experts call this **synergy**.

By behaving like a team player rather than an individual performer, you help your team produce outcomes that are greater than the sum of the individual members' contributions—whether you're leading the team or participating as a member.

Generate creative ideas

Work to understand more about your teammates' expertise and knowledge. The broader your understanding, the more easily you and other team members can combine your perspectives and generate creative ideas.

Here's an example: Sonya, the operations manager on a cross-functional team charged with developing a new banking product, asked the marketing manager to talk about customer preferences. She also discussed product costs with the financial specialist. Her broader understanding sparked an important insight for the team—"Since our customers will likely use this product outside normal business hours, we could provide it through self-service on our home-banking Web site. That would lower costs, bringing revenues straight to our bottom line."

Also seek ways to expand your team's set of feasible alternatives from which to make decisions. The payoff? More creative—and better informed—choices.

Consider this example: Andrew was on a team charged with determining how to use a piece of vacant land owned by his company that abutted the headquarters building. The team weighed two possibilities: selling the land or expanding the current building onto it. Andrew raised additional alternatives, including leasing the space and constructing another type of building on it. By evaluating the potential pros and cons of a wider set of alternatives, his team improved its chances of making a more informed choice.

Share what you know

As a team player, you have a lot to offer—including information, experience, and specialized know-how. The more you share these offerings, the more synergy you help generate in your team. Here are two ideas to get you started:

- **Teach:** For example, if you're familiar with the groupware your team plans to use, provide a tutorial for teammates who have never used it.
- **Provide relevant information:** If you're the marketing person on the team, disclose what your department has learned about customers and suppliers.

Commit to the group

“Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”
—Vince Lombardi

It takes time for people from different specialized functions to work well together. To ease this process, apply these practices:

- **Get to know your teammates:** Take time to know other members of your team on a professional and personal level. You don't necessarily need to become their best friend, but find out how they think and what most motivates and engages their best work. You'll soon find it easier to communicate with them.
- **Complete easy tasks first:** By successfully working on manageable tasks first, you build up positive chemistry with teammates from other functions. You can then move on to more challenging tasks, building on the foundation you've established.
- **Bring in a facilitator:** A consultant who specializes in developing collaborative behavior in groups can be a valuable resource.

Seek win-win solutions with teammates

If you have a conflict with a fellow team member, don't assume you need to compromise on issues important to you. Instead, seek trade-offs that will satisfy your and the other person's interests—and not force either party to concede important issues.

Suppose you and another team member want to take responsibility for the same task. In this case, you might cultivate a win-win mentality through these practices:

- **Explain your circumstances:** "My understanding is that the tasks have not yet been assigned."
- **Explain your interests in the issue at hand:** "I think I can bring valuable expertise to this task that would let me complete it quickly, which is crucial to our team."
- **Communicate your preferences among options, and invite the other person's perspective:** "I'd feel best about this if we at least shared some parts of this task. What do you think?"

Activity: Pick the right solution

It can be difficult to find a workable win-win solution for problems. Hone your skills by finding solutions that satisfy everyone.

You are leading a development team that is working hard to meet an upcoming deadline. In order to meet that deadline, overtime work will be necessary. The team is pretty evenly split between those who'd like to do this overtime on weekday evenings and those who'd like to do it on the weekend. Although either of these options would work, doing the extra work on weekday evenings will ultimately allow for more time for quality assurance work on the project. What should you do?

- ☐ Split the difference. Do half the overtime in the evenings and half on the weekend
Not the best choice. Although "splitting the difference" on issues may seem like a win-win solution, it can just as easily leave both sides equally unhappy. It also doesn't take into account what's best for the business.
- ☐ Have the team do overtime on the weekday evenings and explain that that is the best option for meeting the project goals. To soften any disappointment, discuss with management the possibility of team members getting an extra vacation day in return

Correct choice. Although your team is evenly divided on when to work overtime, in this case you need to be guided by what's best for the project. Offering a reward or compensation for a sacrifice from the team will help turn things into a win-win situation.

- ☐ Allow the team to come in and do overtime whenever they prefer, even if there is some effect on project goals

Not the best choice. Making a choice that could affect your team's ability to meet project goals shouldn't be an option. If you choose a path that diminishes the project's overall success, nobody wins.

You are leading a design team that is working on creating a new logo for the company. After a lot of work, your team has created two possible logos and fragmented into two camps, one in favor of each logo. Management has told you that they want your team to find a single logo design to stand behind. What should you do?

- ☐ Display both designs to other members of the company and determine which one makes the greater impact

Correct choice. Often you can settle a disagreement by appealing to the conflicting parties' shared principles. Here, the shared goal is to create a design with a lot of impact. If one design is proven to have more impact than the other, the whole team will be more likely to willingly defer to it.

- ☐ Encourage the teams to work together on a final logo design combining aspects of both proposed logos

Not the best choice. Splitting the difference between two different ideas usually *doesn't* mean you get the best of each idea. In fact, you frequently will lose the best of each idea and end up with a mediocre final product.

- ☐ Pick your favorite of the two and present that one to management

Not the best choice. Although a decision must be made in this situation, this is not the best way to make sure everyone in your team is at least partly satisfied by that decision.

Support team goals

Before accepting an invitation to join or lead a team, carefully consider:

- **Your level of commitment:** You'll be an ineffective team player if you're not fully committed to the team's goals.
- **Your level of enthusiasm:** Unless you're enthusiastic about the effort, you won't give it your full focus and energy.

If you feel certain that you can go into a team effort fully committed and enthusiastic, seize the opportunity to join or lead the team.

Be reliable

Good team players are reliable. They can be trusted to do their share of the work, do it well, and get it done on time. They do what they say they'll do, and they can be counted on even when things get tough.

To be a reliable team player, follow these guidelines:

- Only make promises you intend to keep.
- Never commit to tasks you cannot complete.
- Be prepared and on time for meetings, and finish work on schedule.
- Deliver work that meets or exceeds the team's expectations.
- Be frank and objective when people ask for your opinion.

Overview

This section provides interactive exercises so you can practice what you've learned. These exercises are self-checks only; your answers will not be used to evaluate your performance in the topic.

Scenario

Assume the role of a manager in a fictional situation and explore different outcomes based on your choices (5-10 minutes).

Check Your Knowledge

Assess your understanding of key points by completing a 10-question quiz (10 minutes).

Scenario: Part 1

Part 1

Alysha, manager of quality assurance for FastComp, is concerned: A few faulty products slipped through the Quality Control process and were almost shipped to customers. No harm was done, but Alysha wants to make sure the problem doesn't become worse. She decides to form a task force to investigate the problem and to find ways to improve the process.

At FastComp, different managers at the company often form teams to address particular challenges. Alysha strongly believes in the power of teams to improve company performance and motivate employees. She knows that to assemble the highest-quality team possible, she'll need to recruit the right task force members.

How should Alysha recruit task force members?

- Look for people with a long and visible history of successful experience on high-level teams.

Not the best choice.

Individuals with very visible histories of working with high-level teams may not view participation in Alysha's task force as important enough for them. Or they may be too occupied by work on other task forces to be able to commit their full attention to Alysha's team.

- Select people who share similar critical functional and interpersonal skills, as well as problem-solving and decision-making talents.

Not the best choice.

Though the ideal mix of members will vary depending on a team's mission, all teams require a complementary mix of *different* functional and interpersonal expertise. Selecting for a mix of similar functional and interpersonal skills can lead to a limited range of expertise and less creative problem solving.

- Describe her team's goals to her manager and colleagues, and then ask these individuals to recommend potential task force members.

Correct choice.

By clarifying her team's goals in her own mind and the minds of her supervisor and colleagues, Alysha stands a better chance of finding the right mix of team members. By asking her boss and peers for help, she also reinforces the successful team culture at FastComp. And because these individuals may have worked closely with potential task force members, they may have better knowledge of their skills.

Scenario: Part 2

Part 2

Alysha has assembled a team with a complementary mix of interpersonal and functional talents—though she's a little nervous about Margot and Jean-Paul. They have very different decision-making styles and tend not to agree. And both have fiery personalities and strong wills. Alysha wonders if their differences may pose a danger to the group's cohesiveness and performance.

The project is just picking up speed when progress comes to a halt. Sure enough, an intense conflict has erupted between Margot and Jean-Paul over how to approach the project. Though Alysha tries to help them deal with the conflict more productively, the tension between them begins to seriously corrode group morale. Alysha is worried that the team won't be able to stay focused on its original goal of improving the Quality Control process.

How can Alysha best help her task force become "unstuck"?

- **Hold a meeting and insist that everyone openly identify all problem behaviors among team members.**

Correct choice.

Skillfully facilitated, this approach can help all team members commit to improving their behavior as a result of the group's feedback. Feedback should include which behaviors team members like, which cause problems for them, how each member could behave differently, and what members count on from each other. At the meeting, Alysha can also help the group revisit its collective goals.

- **Remove Margot and Jean-Paul from the team to avoid further damage to team morale and to regain team focus.**

Not the best choice.

There are other strategies that Alysha can take to get the team moving forward again, such as holding a facilitated meeting on group process. Part of Alysha's role as team leader is to promote team development and shape behaviors reflecting the expectations set for the team. Removing Margot and Jean-Paul may be the right thing to do eventually, but Alysha should try other strategies first.

- **Ask the advice of managers who know and recommended Margot and Jean-Paul.**

Not the best choice.

As team leader, Alysha should hold a group meeting in which team members collectively develop an approach for managing conflict within the task force. Consulting the managers who recommended Margot and Jean-Paul may yield some helpful insights, but it puts the spotlight on those two individuals rather than on the team overall. And it doesn't help the team strengthen its collective problem-solving skills.

Scenario: Part 3

Part 3

Alysha holds an open meeting to address interpersonal conflict and problematic behaviors within the team. Though the meeting is difficult, it generates productive ideas for handling such episodes. Margot and Jean-Paul both manage to contribute valuable suggestions. Armed with an effective conflict-management approach that members have developed together, the task force moves forward once again.

Now Alysha needs to manage another important phase of team leadership: evaluating the team's performance *during* the project. In looking at the team's work so far, Alysha weighs various factors in preparing her evaluation.

What should Alysha consider in evaluating her team's performance?

- Gaps identified in the Quality Control process that increase the risk of faulty products slipping through inspection

Good choice.

It's critical to take *results* into account. When evaluating team performance during the project, Alysha should consider how well the group is achieving its specific, short-term goals. In her evaluation, she might also consider the quality of the work completed, as well as what new knowledge and skills the group has acquired.

- The potential long-term impact of the team's effort on overall product quality

Not the best choice.

Long-term potential impact on overall product quality is not one of the task force's goals. This impact may be important to analyze eventually; however, in evaluating team performance during the project, Alysha should focus instead on how well the group has achieved its specific, short-term goals. She should also assess how well team members have worked together to achieve those results.

- Overall team collaboration in accomplishing their goals

Good choice.

Team-process factors, such as collaboration among team members, are as important as the group's results. Team members who develop effective ways of working together can draw on those skills when they work on future teams and projects, and thus add lasting value no matter what configuration they're working in. Alysha might also assess *individual* team members' performance.

Scenario: Conclusion

Conclusion

In skillfully leading her task force, Alysha has demonstrated the value of teams at FastComp. Thanks to her team's success, the Quality Control process is now working reliably. In addition, the members of her task force have learned new functional and interpersonal skills. These abilities will make them valuable contributors as they continue to work on projects at FastComp—whether on the same team or on a new team in the future.

Activity: Check Your Knowledge: Question 1

Which of the following phrases should not be used to complete the sentence "A team is a group of individuals with . . ."

- Complementary skills committed to a common purpose

Not the best choice.

This phrase actually *would* be used to describe a team. A team comprises members who have complementary skills, are committed to a common purpose, set common performance goals, and define an approach to which they hold themselves collectively accountable.

- Similar skills and background

Correct choice.

A team does *not* comprise members with similar skills and background. Instead, members have complementary skills, because a mix of different skills is required to get the job done.

- Common performance goals

Not the best choice.

This phrase actually *would* be used to describe a team. A team comprises members who have complementary skills, are committed to a common purpose, set common performance goals, and define an approach to which they hold themselves collectively accountable.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 2

Which of the following statements best describes a self-directed work team?

- The team meets on an ongoing, daily basis to perform an entire work process.

Correct choice.

A self-directed work team meets on an ongoing, daily basis to handle an entire work process. For example, a team of eight people at a steel mill might take responsibility for ensuring that raw materials are purchased correctly according to company guidelines.

- The team gathers to address a specific problem or opportunity and then disbands.

Not the best choice.

This statement actually describes a project team, not a self-directed work team. A self-directed work team meets on an ongoing, daily basis to perform an entire work process. For example, a group of eight people at a steel mill takes responsibility for ensuring that raw materials are purchased correctly according to company guidelines.

- The team brings geographically separate individuals together to handle specific tasks.

Not the best choice.

This statement describes a virtual team, not a self-directed work team. A self-directed work team meets on an ongoing, daily basis to perform an entire work process. For example, a group of eight people at a steel mill takes responsibility for ensuring that raw materials are purchased correctly according to company guidelines.

- The team works on a specific quality, productivity, or service problem.

Not the best choice.

This statement describes a quality circle, not a self-directed work team. A self-directed work team meets on an ongoing, daily basis to perform an entire work process. For example, a group of eight people at a steel mill takes responsibility for ensuring that raw materials are purchased correctly according to company guidelines.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 3

Which one of the following activities would best help you cultivate a supportive environment for your team?

- Remind your team that lack of support from other departments is not relevant so long as long as the team has the resources it requires

Not the best choice.

All teams depend on larger groups, departments, divisions, and their entire organization for resources, information, and assistance. If these surrounding entities are supportive, the team stands a better chance of success. Thus you would not want your team to ignore other departments that don't support its initiatives.

The correct answer is "Encourage team-based work whenever possible in your organization." This strategy helps you cultivate the wider supportive environment your team needs to succeed.

- Suggest a firm reporting structure to clarify decision making and lines of authority

Not the best choice.

Establishing a firm reporting structure would not help you cultivate a supportive environment for your team. Instead of forcing your team to conform to a rigid reporting structure, encourage team-based work throughout the organization. This strategy helps you cultivate the wider supportive environment your team needs to succeed. All teams depend on larger groups,

departments, divisions, and their entire organization for resources, information, and assistance. If these surrounding entities are supportive, the team stands a better chance of success.

- [Encourage team-based work whenever possible in your organization](#)

Correct choice.

By encouraging team-based work whenever possible in your organization, you help cultivate a wider supportive environment for your team. All teams depend on larger groups, departments, divisions, and their entire organization for resources, information, and assistance. If these surrounding entities are supportive, the team stands a better chance of success.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 4

You've been charged with tackling a project that has high complexity, many interlinking components, and limited duration. How likely is it that you would decide to set up a team to handle the project?

- [Not at all likely](#)

Not the best choice.

To handle this type of project, you would be very likely to assemble a project team. That's because the work is complex (comprises numerous subtasks, each of which requires specialized skills or knowledge); it entails great interdependence of task components (work can be completed only if multiple individuals collaborate together); and it will be of limited duration. A team would give you your best chance of successfully handling a project with these characteristics.

- [Somewhat likely](#)

Not the best choice.

To handle this type of project, you would be very likely to assemble a project team. That's because the work is complex (comprises numerous subtasks, each of which requires specialized skills or knowledge); it entails great interdependence of task components (work can be completed only if multiple individuals collaborate together); and it will be of limited duration. A team would give you your best chance of successfully handling a project with these characteristics.

- [Very likely](#)

Correct choice.

It's wise to assemble a project team when the work is complex (comprises numerous subtasks, each of which requires specialized skills or knowledge); entails great interdependence of task components (work can be completed only if multiple individuals collaborate together); and will be of limited duration.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 5

Which of the following is the best example of an effectively defined team goal?

- "Improve the effectiveness of our purchasing process this year."

Not the best choice.

This team goal is expressed in vague terms: What does "improved effectiveness" look like? A well-defined team goal describes achievable desired results in specific, measurable terms and indicates when the goal is to be achieved. Thus, the correct answer is "Reduce assembly line errors from 15% to 3% by year-end."

- "Reduce assembly line errors from 15% to 3% by year-end."

Correct choice.

This meets all the criteria of a well-defined team goal: It describes achievable desired results in specific, measurable terms and indicates when the goal is to be achieved.

- "Make our company the top provider of customer service in the industry."

Not the best choice.

This team goal is likely beyond the team's reach: Only one company can be the "top provider of customer service in the industry." A well-defined team goal describes achievable desired results in specific, measurable terms and indicates when the goal is to be achieved. Thus, the correct answer is "Reduce assembly line errors from 15% to 3% by year-end."

Check Your Knowledge: Question 6

Upper management has appointed you to be the leader of a new team, and encourages you to develop a team charter. What is the purpose of a team charter?

- To spell out the nature of the work and your expectations for the results in a concise, written format

Correct choice.

In order to define the nature of the work and your expectations, the team charter should contain some or all of the following: team members' roles and responsibilities, how the team's work relates to corporate goals and benefits the company, expected deadlines and deliverables, available resources, the team's decision-making authority, measures for success, key milestones, and major risks.

- To list the individuals you plan to recruit for your team and define the skills they will bring to the table

Not the best choice.

Though you do need to decide whom to recruit for your team and identify needed skills, this is not the purpose of a team charter. The purpose of a team charter is to spell out the nature of the work and your expectations for the results in a concise, written format. Good team charters therefore contain some or all of the following: team members' roles and responsibilities, how the team's work relates to corporate goals and benefits the company, expected deadlines and deliverables, available resources, the team's decision-making authority, measures for success, key milestones, and major risks.

- To lay out the costs you anticipate will be associated with the team's efforts

Not the best choice.

Though you do need to lay out the costs you anticipate will be associated with your team's efforts, this is not the purpose of a team charter. The purpose of a team charter is to spell out the nature of the work and your expectations for the results in a concise, written format. Good team charters therefore contain some or all of the following: team members' roles and responsibilities, how the team's work relates to corporate goals and benefits the company, expected deadlines and deliverables, available resources, the team's decision-making authority, measures for success, key milestones, and major risks.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 7

Four frequently used approaches for making team decisions include 1) majority rule, 2) consensus, 3) small group decision-making, and 4) leader decides with input. Which of these is most likely to help build team commitment?

- Majority rule and consensus

Correct choice.

In selecting a decision-making approach, your team must weigh some trade-offs. The more involved the team members are in the decision-making process, the more likely it is that they will support the outcome. Therefore, the consensus and majority rule approaches can help build team commitment.

- Consensus only

Not the best choice.

Consensus is not the only decision-making approach that helps build team commitment. Majority rule also builds commitment. Both approaches involve all team members in the decision-making process, maximizing the likelihood that they will support the outcome. Therefore, the correct answer is "Majority rule and consensus."

- Small group decision-making and majority rule

Not the best choice.

Though majority rule helps build commitment because it involves all team members in decision making, the small-group approach is less likely to build commitment. That's because with small-group decision making, a subset of individuals with relevant experience and skills makes specific

decisions. The correct answer is "Majority rule and consensus," because both of these approaches involve all team members in the decision-making process, maximizing the likelihood that they will support the outcome.

- [Leader decides with input](#)

Not the best choice.

With this decision-making approach, the team leader gathers input from members and uses it to make decisions. Because this method does not involve all team members in the decision process, it is less likely to build team commitment. The correct answer is "Majority rule and consensus," because both of these approaches involve all team members in the decision-making process, maximizing the likelihood that they will support the outcome.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 8

Whether you're leading a team or are serving as a member of a team led by someone else, it's essential that you demonstrate the qualities of a good team player rather than an individual performer. Which of the following activities would most enable you to be a good team player?

- [Encourage other team members to streamline the alternatives under consideration during a meeting, to make the decision process more efficient](#)

Not the best choice.

Encouraging other team members to streamline the alternatives under consideration during a meeting would not help you be a good team player, because true team players seek ways to expand the set of feasible alternatives from which to make decisions.

The correct answer is "Challenge any assumptions you have that say you must compromise with other team members on issues that are important to you."

Team players don't assume they have to compromise on issues important to them if a conflict arises with a fellow team member. Instead, they seek trade-offs that will satisfy their and the other member's interests—and that will not force either party to concede on vital issues. They cultivate a win-win mentality by explaining the circumstances behind their position, identifying the issues at hand, and communicating their preferences among options.

- [Forge deep bonds of friendship, as well as professional bonds, with the other members of your team](#)

Not the best choice.

Being a good team player doesn't necessarily mean becoming everyone's best friend. The correct answer is "Challenge any assumptions you have that say you must compromise with other team members on issues that are important to you." Team players don't assume they have to compromise on issues important to them if a conflict arises with a fellow team member. Instead, they seek trade-offs that will satisfy their and the other member's interests—and that will not force either party to concede on vital issues. They cultivate a win-win mentality by explaining the circumstances behind their position, identifying the issues at hand, and communicating their preferences among options.

- Challenge any assumptions you have that say you must compromise with other team members on issues that are important to you

Correct choice.

Team players don't assume they have to compromise on issues important to them if a conflict arises with a fellow team member. Instead, they seek trade-offs that will satisfy their and the other member's interests—and that will not force either party to concede on vital issues. They cultivate a win-win mentality by explaining the circumstances behind their position, identifying the issues at hand, and communicating their preferences among options.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 9

Which of the following best describes the open team discussion method used to address interpersonal conflict within a team?

- A team member exhibiting problem behavior meets with a facilitator to discuss the situation. Alternative behaviors are offered, and the team member commits to addressing the problem behavior.

Not the best choice.

A meeting between a team member and a facilitator is not the way the open team discussion method works. In open team discussions, individual team members define behaviors they like in the other team members, behaviors they consider problematic, what the team needs from each person, and how each team member could behave differently. After each team member shares feedback about the rest, people commit to changing their behavior based on that feedback. The team leader then follows up to ensure that members honor their commitments.

- Individual team members identify behaviors they like in other team members, behaviors they find problematic, and ways in which they'd like other members to behave differently.

Correct choice.

This describes how teams conduct an open discussion to address interpersonal conflict. After each team member shares feedback about the other members, people commit to changing their behavior based on that feedback. The team leader then follows up to ensure that members honor their commitments.

- Two team members who are having a conflict discuss the problem during a team meeting. The team offers suggestions for resolving the conflict.

Not the best choice.

This is not the way the open team discussion method works. In open team discussions, individual team members define behaviors they like in the other team members, behaviors they consider problematic, what the team needs from each person, and how each team member could behave differently. After each team member shares feedback about the rest, people commit to changing their behavior based on that feedback. The team leader then follows up to ensure that members honor their commitments.

Check Your Knowledge: Question 10

Traditional performance evaluation is most often oriented toward results or output. What is a primary difference between traditional performance evaluation and evaluating team performance?

- The entire group is evaluated on performance, not each individual.

Not the best choice.

Though an entire group may be evaluated on its performance, this is an overly vague statement of the difference between traditional performance evaluation and evaluating team performance. The correct answer is "How the team collaborated is evaluated as well as the results the team achieved." In evaluations of team performance, results are still critical, but the way in which the team achieved those results is also assessed. The collaborative process used to achieve results is an important measure of team performance.

- How the team collaborated is evaluated as well as the result.

Correct choice.

The primary difference between traditional performance evaluation and evaluating team performance is that, while results are still critical, the way in which the team achieved those results is also assessed. The collaborative process used to achieve results is an important measure of team performance.

- You as team leader are evaluated as well as the outcome or result.

Not the best choice.

Though you may be evaluated along with the team's outcome or result, this is not the primary difference between traditional performance evaluation and evaluating team performance. The correct answer is "How the team collaborated is evaluated as well as the results the team achieved." In evaluations of team performance, results are still critical, but the way in which the team achieved those results is also assessed. The collaborative process used to achieve results is an important measure of team performance.

Check Your Knowledge: Results

Your score:

Steps for launching a team

1. Host a launch meeting.

- At the meeting, welcome everyone and clarify who belongs to the team.
- Ensure that everyone agrees on the charter, the project goal, and the deliverables.

- Reiterate how the team's goals support the unit and company's objectives.
- Clarify available resources.
- Describe team incentives.
- Have participants introduce themselves.

2. Select a decision-making method.

- Agree on who will make which decisions and how decisions will be made.
- Weigh the pros and cons of decision-making methods, such as majority rules, consensus, small group decides, and leader decides with input from members.

3. Set up workspaces to encourage collaboration.

- Dedicate a special "team room" to your team's project work, meetings, and informal gatherings.
- Make the team room comfortable and inviting.
- Reduce the physical distance between team members' offices as much as possible.

4. Establish behavior norms.

Clarify expectations about attendance, interruptions, topics that are open for discussion, constructive criticism, confidentiality, and commitment to taking action to accomplish the team's goals.

5. Schedule the team's work.

- Clarify the team's objectives in clear, measurable terms.
- Indicate the time frame in which each objective will be achieved.
- Specify the tasks and subtasks that must be completed for each objective to be met.
- Assign tasks and subtasks to team members, based on which individuals are best able to handle each task.
- Reiterate how each task supports the team's goal and, therefore, the unit and company's larger objectives.

6. Define success measures.

- Identify performance metrics that reflect the achievement of clear milestones on the road to the team's goals; for example, "Complete the job in 18 days or less," or "Provide 99% error-free service after switching to the new system."
- Make the success measures challenging—but achievable.

7. Develop a budget.

- Create a budget showing how the team expects to use its available resources.
- Indicate cost of required resources; for instance, personnel, outside help, travel, training, capital expenditures, and research.

Steps for building an effective team

1. Recruit competent members.

- Identify the skills needed to fulfill the team's goals.
- Identify individuals who possess the required talent, knowledge, and experience.
- Recruit for any missing competencies or find ways to strengthen these skills in existing team members.
- Look for members who can learn new skills quickly as needed.
- Consider assigning team members, inviting people to volunteer for the team, and asking people to nominate members.

2. Define a clear, common goal.

- Identify the team's goal in concise, clear language—such as "Overhaul the customer service process so that 95% of incoming calls will be handled by one service representative."
- Explain how the goal supports the company's vision, values, and strategy.

- Clarify the team's duration—how long it will work together to achieve its goal.
- 3. Identify performance metrics.**
 - Select metrics that express how the team's success will be measured; for example, "80% of all customer calls will be resolved in three minutes or less."
 - Set up performance metrics for interim milestones that the team can achieve as it progresses toward its ultimate goal.
- 4. Foster commitment to the goal.**
 - Design a reward system that encourages collaborative work and emphasizes collective achievement.
 - Encourage the use of language emphasizing communal effort, such as "We are making good progress" or "Where do we stand with respect to our deadlines?"
- 5. Ensure that every member contributes to and benefits from the team.**
 - Check that people are supporting the team's goal, rather than simply showing up at meetings to render their opinions.
 - Ensure that the benefits earned from hard work comprise more than just money—for example, learning experiences, promotions, and public recognition.
- 6. Cultivate a supportive environment.**
 - Protect your team from managers and departments that don't support the team's effort.
 - Avoid forcing team members to adhere to a rigid hierarchical structure.
 - Encourage team-based work throughout your organization.
- 7. Align behavior through rewards.**
 - Ensure that each team member's goals support the team's and company's high-level objectives.
 - Establish rewards that support this alignment—for instance, since the team's sponsor is accountable for its success, at least part of his or her compensation should be linked to the team's performance.
- 8. Create a team charter.**
 - Develop a concise written document that spells out the nature of the work that the team will do and expectations for results.
 - Work with the team to develop a project plan, based on the charter, that specifies the means by which the team will achieve its goals.

Steps for addressing team conflicts through private channels

- 1. Select a facilitator (an outside person or designated team member) to meet privately with the person exhibiting problem behavior.**
 - Choose a facilitator who has been charged with maintaining team relationships and who has skill in this area.
 - Explain the problem behavior to the facilitator if he or she isn't yet familiar with the situation.
 - Arrange a private meeting between the facilitator and the team member in question.
- 2. Have the facilitator describe the problem behavior.**
 - The facilitator should use neutral language that focuses on the person's behavior rather than the person's character. For example, "You committed to giving Tom two hours of your time last week to discuss the survey results, but then you didn't follow through," *not* "You're being selfish with your time."
 - The facilitator should then describe the problem behavior in specific terms, such as "You came 20 minutes late to each of the last five team meetings."
- 3. Have the facilitator describes the impact of the problem behavior.**

The facilitator should describe the impact on the team in specific terms. For instance, "When you're late to meetings, the other team members think that you're not committed to the team. They feel slighted and start asking themselves why they should work hard to come to meetings on time, if other team members aren't doing the same. The meetings become unorganized and time is wasted."

4. Have the facilitator make recommendations about alternative behaviors.

The facilitator should present the team member with a more productive behavior to replace the problematic behavior; for example, "come to team meetings no more than five minutes late" or "follow through on promises you've made to other team members."

5. Have the facilitator explain what will happen if the problem behavior continues.

The facilitator should describe the consequences of not correcting the problem behavior. For instance, "If tardiness to meetings continues, you'll be removed from the team."

6. Follow up on the team member's commitments to new behavior.

- Document the commitments the team member has made.
- Observe his or her behavior after the private meeting with the facilitator.
- Follow through on the consequences described in Step 5 if the team member fails to honor his or her commitments to behavior changes.

Steps for holding an open team discussion about conflicts

1. Ask each team member to identify positive behaviors he or she likes in each other team member and describe the impact of the behaviors on group dynamics.

- Encourage people to use "I" language; such as "I really like the way Tom waits for other team members to finish speaking before he offers his ideas."
- Suggest that people describe just one or two desirable behaviors for each teammate.

2. Ask each team member to identify problematic behaviors in each other team member and describe the impact of the behaviors on group dynamics.

- Encourage people to explain why they believe a specific behavior is causing problems for the team. For example, "When Susan interrupts others, I feel that we lose the opportunity to hear ideas that could have been valuable."
- Suggest that people describe just one or two problematic behaviors for each teammate.

3. Ask each team member to describe how they'd like one another to behave differently.

- Prompt people to be specific; for instance, "I'd like Harry to arrive at team meetings on time."
- Have members describe one or two behaviors for each teammate.

4. Ask each team member to state what the team needs from each other member to succeed.

Examples might include, "I feel that we need Martha's technical expertise to solve our problem" or "I believe that the team needs Carl's commitment to the decision-making method we've selected."

5. Ask each team member for his or her commitment to changing behavior based on feedback provided by teammates.

Prompt people to explain precisely how they will commit to changing their behavior; for example, "I promise to come to team meetings on time" or "I commit to spending two hours with Joyce next week to explain our new database system."

6. Follow up to ensure that people honor their commitments.

- Document the commitments people have made.
- Observe team members' behavior after the open team discussion.
- Address any failures to honor commitments to behavior changes.

Tips for creating a team charter

- Explain the roles that team members will play. For example, Sally will be in charge of cultivating positive team relationships. Henry will focus on providing technical expertise.
- Clarify team members' responsibilities.
- Explain how the team's work relates to unit and company goals.
- Outline the deadlines by which the work is scheduled to be completed.
- Define the team's deliverables in clear language.
- Describe the resources (money, time, personnel, work space, etc.) that will be available to the team.
- Clarify the kinds of decisions the team will have the authority to make.
- Define the measures of success the team will use to assess its progress toward its objective.
- Identify the major milestones the team will aim for while progressing toward its goal.
- Name the major risks associated with the team's effort, and ways the team will address those risks.

Tips for defining team goals

- Make sure team goals are SMART—that is, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based. For example, "Reduce order-processing errors from 25% to 10% by year-end."
- Always explain how each team goal relates to and supports the company's strategic objective. For example, "Reducing order-processing errors from 25% to 10% by year-end will help our company achieve its objective of providing top-quality customer service."
- Consider establishing interim milestones on the way to each goal. For instance, "Reduce order-processing errors from 25% to 20% by end of first quarter," "Reduce errors from 20% to 15% by end of second quarter," and "Reduce from 15% to 10% by end of fourth quarter."

Tips for hosting a launch meeting

- Welcome everyone to the team effort.
- Invite participants to introduce themselves and describe their backgrounds and expertise.
- Clarify who belongs on the team—including core members and peripheral members who may participate for a limited time.
- Ask people to explain what they hope to contribute to the team's efforts.
- Go over the team charter, the project goal, and the expected deliverables to ensure that everyone understands and agrees to them.
- Help participants feel that they're part of something that will have important benefits for the company—by explaining how the team's work will support the company's strategic goals.
- Explain which resources will be available to the team.
- Explain which non-team personnel (other employees, suppliers, customers) the team members will likely interact with.

- Describe the rewards team members will receive if the team meets or exceeds its goals.
- Cultivate an atmosphere of energy, enthusiasm, and camaraderie.

Checklist for evaluating yourself as a team leader

<i>Checklist for Evaluating Yourself as a Team Leader</i>				
<i>To evaluate yourself as a team leader, answer these questions. Your answers will help to pinpoint areas of improvement that may lead to better leadership.</i>				
Question	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
1. Do you help the team clarify its purpose, goals, and approach?				
2. Do you actively participate as a member of the team, not just serve in the role of leader?				
3. Are you able to strike a balance between doing things yourself and letting other people do them?				
4. Do you facilitate effective team decision making?				
5. Do you help the team determine work assignments?				
6. Do you put team results ahead of personal achievement?				
7. Do you help the team resolve conflicts and problems in a positive and constructive way?				
8. Do you ensure that the team is accountable for its work?				
9. Are you a champion for the team? For example, do you fight for the resources that the team needs, promote the team's best interests in dealings with the company, and have an undying belief in the project?				
10. Do you identify and act to remove barriers for the team?				
11. Do you see when your actions could hinder the team?				
12. Do you help the team evaluate itself?				
13. Are you able to strike a balance between too much control and too little guidance?				
14. Do you set milestones for the team to achieve as it progresses toward its goals?				
15. Do you ensure that every team member both contributes to and benefits from the team effort?				
16. Do you model the kind of behaviors you want to see in your team?				
17. Do you initiate processes that promote team development and performance?				
18. Do you encourage team members to share information and ideas?				
19. Do you invite members to offer feasible alternatives from which to make decisions?				
20. Do you only agree to lead teams whose goals you value and to whom you can make a thorough commitment?				
<i>The leader of a highly effective team is likely to answer "always" or "often" to most of these questions. If you answered "rarely" or "never" to any question, you might want to think about the issue that the question implies and about ways in which you might be inhibiting team performance. Brainstorm ways you can get help; for example, if you think it's appropriate, consider asking for guidance from the team sponsor. Or, think about whether other managers or peers can help. You might also consider asking the team for guidance.</i>				

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Worksheet for deciding whether to assemble a team

<i>Worksheet for Deciding Whether to Assemble a Team</i>			
<i>Use this tool to decide whether a team is needed to accomplish a specific effort. For each statement below, place a check mark in either the "Not at all true," "Somewhat true," or "Very true" box.</i>			
Part I. Assess the work's complexity			
Statement	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
The work will require the processing of large volumes of information.			
There is high uncertainty associated with the work.			
The work involves numerous subtasks, each of which requires specialized skills or knowledge.			
There are no standardized procedures for completing the work.			
Part II. Assess the work's interdependence			
Statement	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
The work can be completed only if multiple individuals collaborate together.			
Each team member must bring different specialized skills or knowledge to the effort.			
Part III. Assess the work's uniqueness			
Statement	Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
The work is nonroutine and represents a unique challenge.			
The work has a limited duration (suggesting a project team).			
The work will present a recurring challenge (suggesting a self-directed work team).			
Part IV. Review your responses			
<i>Look over your responses in Parts I-III.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If you answered "Not at all true" for many of the statements, you may not need a team to handle this particular job.</i> <i>If you answered "Somewhat true" for many of the statements, you might consider assembling a team.</i> <i>If you answered "Very true" for many of the statements, you can feel confident that assembling a team is the right thing to do.</i> 			

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Worksheet for developing a team charter

<i>Worksheet for Developing a Team Charter</i>
<i>Use this worksheet to clarify the details of your team's charter.</i>
What is your team's objective?
What roles will each team member play?
What will each team member's responsibilities consist of?
When is the team's work expected to be finished?
What, precisely, is the team expected to deliver?
How will the team's efforts benefit the company?
Which resources will be available to the team?
What kinds of decisions will the team have the authority to make?
How will the team's success be measured?
What are the major milestones the team will reach while progressing toward its goal?
What are the major risks associated with the team's goal, and how will those risks be addressed?

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Role clarification worksheet

<i>Role Clarification Worksheet</i>	
<i>Ask each team member to complete the worksheet. Responses can be compared as part of a team discussion about roles.</i>	
1. List roles/responsibilities of each team member:	
Team Member Name	Roles/Responsibilities
2. Roles or specific areas of responsibility which are unclear:	
<i>Aspects of my role which are unclear:</i>	
<i>Aspects of others' roles which are unclear:</i>	
3. Roles which overlap or conflict:	
4. Roles which should be shared within the team:	
5. Additional roles or responsibilities which should be assumed by the team:	

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Worksheet for assessing team member's skills

<i>Worksheet for Assessing Team Members' Skills</i>	
<i>Use this worksheet to take stock of the skills that potential team members might bring to the table.</i>	
Part I. Identify Needed Skills	
1. You've decided that a team is needed to address a problem, handle a process, or tackle a project. What is your team's objective? Write it below.	
2. Give your team's objective, what are the results you expect from the team effort?	
3. What activities will produce the results you expect?	
4. What skills do those activities require?	

Part II. Identify People with Required Skills		
1. Survey your organization. Which individuals have the needed skills you've identified in Part I? List them in the table below.		
Potential Team Member	Skills that He/She Possesses	Activity Requiring Skill
2. Review the table you completed above. Have you listed at least one person to represent each of the following skills?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Technical</i>: expertise in specific areas • <i>Problem-solving</i>: ability to analyze different situations and craft solutions that others may not see • <i>Interpersonal</i>: capacity to work effectively with others • <i>Organizational</i>: understanding of the company's political and logistical landscape and ability to form networks of contacts throughout the organization • <i>Developmental</i>: ability to master new skills as needed • <i>Communication</i>: capacity to effectively and efficiently exchange information and listen to others 		
3. If any of the above skills is missing in the list of proposed team members you've prepared, how will you fill the gap?		

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Checklist for assessing your team's goals

Checklist for Assessing Your Team's Goals		
Use the checklist below to assess characteristics of your team's goals. Read the questions below and check off your answer.		
Question	Yes	No
1. Did the team jointly create its goals?		
2. Has the team translated its purpose into specific and measurable performance goals (for example, "Respond to all customers within 24 hours")?		
3. Are the team goals rather than organizational goals or just one person's goals (for example, yours)?		
4. Does meeting the goals require the contribution of every team member?		
5. Are the goals clear?		
6. Are the goals simple?		
7. Are the goals realistic?		
8. Are the goals ambitious?		
9. Can the goals be measured?		
10. Do the goals measure the team's cross-functional purpose?		
11. Do all team members agree with the way in which the goals will be measured?		
12. Do the goals provide clear yardsticks for team accountability?		
13. Are the team's goals prioritized?		
14. Is the priority of those goals clear to and agreed-upon by all team members?		
15. Do all team members understand the goals?		
16. Do all team members explain the goals in the same way?		
17. Do all team members agree with the goals?		
18. Do the goals allow for small wins along the way?		
19. Do these small wins or benchmarks reflect critical points in the path toward the team's goals?		
20. Do the goals add real value to the company's results?		
<p>A highly effective team is likely to answer "yes" to most or all of these questions. If you answered "no" to any of these questions, the team may want to discuss the issue and how it may be affecting the team. Changing or refining the team's goals may lead to better performance.</p>		

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Why Develop Others?

"At the end of the day, you bet on people, not strategies."

Larry Bossidy

Former CEO, AlliedSignal

In today's global business environment, markets and regulations change quickly. Competitors constantly innovate. Technological changes are the norm.

In order to outmaneuver the competition and meet the demands of the moment, organizations must be agile. They must execute flawlessly. And they must transform themselves continuously.

Are your leaders ready?

Dr. Noel M. Tichy

Professor

University of Michigan Ross School of Business

We have now entered an era where I don't care what industry you're in, you need leaders who can make decisions, make judgment calls at every single level. All the way down to the interface with the customer.

If you go to a company like Google or any of the high tech companies, a lot of the innovation that Amazon does is happening right at the front line. Go ahead, try it, put it out there, we'll learn from it. That cannot happen if the senior leadership doesn't have a commitment to both develop the leadership capability, but develop the business through engaging people at all levels of the organization.

Becoming a teaching organization

I like to tell parents that they cannot delegate their responsibility to develop their children. And I think it is the same in an organization. Day in and day out the person that has the biggest impact on people in the organization is the next level above and the associates around and below. And so to build a learning organization I say is not enough. Learning could be, you know we are learning cooking, we are learning this or that, but teaching organizations, when I learned something, I have a responsibility to teach my colleagues.

So everybody takes responsibility for generating new knowledge and it is not enough to be a learner, you then have to translate it into teaching.

The Virtuous Teaching Cycle

The role of a leader is to ensure that the people who work for them and around them are better every day. There's only one way to make people better. It's to teach them, learn from them, create what I call "virtuous teaching cycles", not command and control.

A virtuous teaching cycle is teach learn, teach learn. And the leader has a responsibility for reducing the hierarchy, for having a point of view to start the discussion, but then to be responsible to hear everyone's voice, get everyone involved in a disciplined way. It is not a free for all. But it is the leader's responsibility to create that virtuous teaching cycle.

A wonderful example of virtuous teaching cycle is the program that Roger Enrico ran at Pepsi, where every one of the 10 vice presidents comes with a business project.

Roger Enrico gets smarter as result of five days with 10 vice presidents, because he's learning from them. He needs to lower the hierarchy. He needs to be open to learning. And in turn, the people participating need to be energized and empowered to come up and engage in problem solving.

Another example is at Best Buy, where every morning in the stores you would bring 20 associates or so together and they would review the profit and loss statement from the day before, what we learned from the different customer segments in our stores, what we can do to improve our performance this day. And they do that every single day. The store manager was learning mostly from the associates on the floor.

That was a virtuous teaching cycle were everybody is teaching everybody, everybody is learning and the result has been an incredible result at Best Buy.

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

- Harvey S. Firestone

Founder, Firestone Tire and Rubber Co

There are clear advantages to leader-led development.

But for many leaders, taking on teaching, coaching, and other development responsibilities can seem daunting. You might avoid taking on these roles due to lack of time, resources, or your own lack of comfort with this role.

The following tips and resources can help you impart valuable learning to your team every day.

To develop others...

- Start with a Teachable Point of View

The first requirement of being able to develop other leaders is to have what I call a teachable point of view. I often give the example of, if I ran a tennis camp and you just came to day one of the tennis camp, I better have a teachable point of view on how I teach tennis. So you are standing there looking at me and it has got four elements. One, the ideas, well how do I teach the backhand, the forehand, the serve, rules of tennis. Then if I am a good tennis coach, I have a set of values. What are the right behaviors I want, how do I want you to dress, how do I want you to behave on the tennis court.

But if that's all I have, what do I do? Show you a power point presentation and then expect you to hit 500 backhands, 500 serves, run around for eight hours. I have to have a teachable point of view on emotional energy. How do I motivate you to buy in to the ideas and values?

On one end of the spectrum it could be I threaten you with corporal punishment, the other I can give you stock options, I can make you feel good about yourself, I can help you develop as a human being, what motivates you.

And then finally, how do I make the tough judgment calls, the yes/no, decisions as the tennis coach, the ball is in, the ball is out. I don't hire consultants and set up a committee, it is yes/no. And the same with running a business, what are the products, services, distribution channels, customer segments that are going to grow top line growth and profitability of the organization.

What are the values that I want everyone in the organization to have, how do I emotionally energize thousands of people, and then how do I make the yes/no, judgments on people and on business issues. So the fundamental building block of being able to develop other leaders is to have that teachable point of view just like the tennis coach.

To develop others...

- Lead with questions

Questions are hugely important because you want to create dialogue and again, what I call a virtuous teaching cycle where the teacher learns from the students and vice versa. Which means everybody ought to be free to ask whatever is on their mind, whatever it will take to get clarity and understanding, but it is not the leader just coming in and freeform asking questions. I believe the leader has a responsibility for framing the discussion, for having as best they can a teachable point of view, they may need help from their people in flushing it out, but they need to set the stage but then it has to be a very interactive, what I call virtuous teaching cycle environment, teach learn, teach learn, teach learn.

To develop others...

- Make it part of your routine

A good example to me of an outstanding leader developing other leaders is Myrtle Potter who at the time I am commenting was Chief Operating Officer of Genentech running the commercial side of the business. And she would take time at the end of every single meeting and do some coaching of the whole team on how we could perform as a team better, and then she would often take individuals and say, could we spend 10 minutes over a cup of coffee, I want to give you some feedback and coaching on that report that you just presented on or how you are handling a particularly difficult human resource issue, but it was part of her regular routine. And I think the challenge for all of us as leaders is to make that a way of life and it is built into the

fabric of how we lead and it is not a one off event, three times a year. It is happening almost every day.

To develop others...

- Make it a priority

One of the biggest challenges in getting people kind of on this path is to overcome some of their own resistance, either fear or the way I view the world I don't have time for this, everybody can make time. Roger Enrico is CEO of Pepsi. He didn't have time to go off for a week at a time and run training sessions. He had to readjust his calendar. So it requires you to look in the mirror and say, is this important. If it is important, of course I can make the time. Then I have to get over my own anxiety on how well I can do it, but it is a commitment to get on the path that says: this is how I am going to drive my own performance and the performance of my colleagues.

To develop others...

- Learn to teach

I think the biggest mistake is to assume you are going to be good at it right off the bat. It is like learning anything else. First time you go out and try and play tennis, good luck. But you got to stay with it and you got to engage your people in helping make you better and them better. And so it is a journey you need to get on, not I am going to do it perfectly when I start out.

If you want to be a great leader who is a great teacher, it's very simple. You have got to dive into the deep end of the pool. But you've got to dive into the pool with preparation. I don't want you drowning. I want you succeeding. It is extraordinarily rewarding for most human beings to teach others. I think once you can turn that switch on, it is self perpetuating. You get a lot of reinforcement, your team is better. You perform better because your performance goes up and it becomes this virtuous teaching cycle.

Your opportunity to develop others

We've heard why developing others can drive greater business results, and how to make the most of your leader-led development efforts. The materials provided in Develop Others enable you to create personalized learning experiences for YOUR team within the flow of their daily activities. Use the guides and projects to engage your team quickly. And to explore how key concepts apply to them in the context of their priorities and goals.

The value of teaching is the performance of the organization is totally dependent on making your people smarter and more aligned every day as the world changes. In the 21st century we are not going to get by with command and control. We are going to have to get by with knowledge creation. The way you create knowledge in an organization is you create these virtuous teaching cycles where you are teaching and learning simultaneously, responding to customer demands and changes, responding to changes in the global environment. My bottom line is if you're not teaching, you're not leading.

A leader's most important role in any organization is making good judgments — well informed, wise decisions about people, strategy and crises that produce the desired outcomes. When a leader shows consistently good judgment, little else matters. When he or she shows poor judgment nothing else

matters. In addition to making their own good judgment calls, good leaders develop good judgment among their team members.

Dr. Noel M. Tichy**Professor, University of Michigan Ross School of Business**

Dr. Noel M. Tichy is Professor of Management and Organizations, and Director of the Global Business Partnership at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The Global Business Partnership links companies and students around the world to develop and engage business leaders to incorporate global citizenship activities, both environmental projects and human capital development, for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Previously, Noel was head of General Electric's Leadership Center at Crotonville, where he led the transformation to action learning at GE. Between 1985 and 1987, he was Manager of Management Education for GE where he directed its worldwide development efforts at Crotonville. He currently consults widely in both the private and public sectors. He is a senior partner in Action Learning Associates. Noel is author of numerous books and articles, including:

For more information about Noel Tichy, visit <http://www.noeltichy.com>.

Share an Idea

Leaders are in a unique position to recognize the ideas and tools that are most relevant and useful for their teams. If you only have a few minutes, consider sharing an idea or tool from this topic with your team or peers that is relevant and timely to their situation.

For example, consider sending one of the three recommended ideas or tools below to your team with your comments or questions on how the idea or tool can be of value to your organization. By simply sharing the item, you can easily engage others in important conversations and activities relevant to your goals and priorities.

[Steps for building an effective team](#)

[Tips for defining team goals](#)

[Checklist for evaluating yourself as a team leader](#)

To share an idea, tip, step, or tool with your comments via e-mail, select the EMAIL link in the upper right corner of the page that contains the idea, tip, step, or tool that you wish to share.

Discussion 1: Building a high-performing team culture

Most organizations today rely on teams to accomplish complex work effectively and efficiently. When teams work well, they produce essential benefits for their organizations, including creative solutions to problems, improved collaboration throughout the enterprise, and enhanced organizational performance. But teams can only generate these results when their respective cultures set the stage for high performance.

You and your team members can make substantial contributions to your unit or department by improving your capacity to create a high-performing team culture. Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about establishing cultural conditions that support high performance, including selecting appropriate decision-making methods, enhancing collaboration, and creating expectations about how the team will accomplish its work.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Building a High-Performing Team Culture](#)
[Discussion Guide: Building a High-Performing Team Culture](#)
[Discussion Slides: Building a High-Performing Team Culture \(optional\)](#)
[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

Discussion 2: Forming a team

Forming an effective team begins by defining a clear purpose and concrete measures of success. Members of high-performing teams know exactly what they are expected to do: They operate within a well-defined team charter. They also understand that their success will be determined by how well they meet established performance metrics.

You and your team can make substantial contributions to your organization by enhancing your capacity to launch an effective team. Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about generating effective team charters, and developing measures of success.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Forming a Team](#)
[Discussion Guide: Forming a Team](#)
[Discussion Slides: Forming a Team \(optional\)](#)
[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

Start a Group Project

Just like any change effort, successfully incorporating new skills and behaviors into one's daily activities and habits takes time and effort. After reviewing or discussing the concepts in this topic, your direct reports will still need your support to fully apply new concepts and skills. They will need to overcome a variety of barriers including a lack of time, lack of confidence, and a fear of making mistakes. They will also need opportunities to hone their skills and break old habits. To help ensure their success, you can provide safe opportunities for individuals and your team as a whole to practice and experiment with new skills and behaviors on the job.

For example, to encourage the adoption of new norms, you can provide your team members with coaching, feedback, and additional time to complete tasks that require the use of new skills. Management approaches such as these will encourage team members to experiment with new skills until they become proficient.

Group learning projects provide another valuable technique for accelerating team members' development of new behaviors. A group learning project is an on-the-job activity aimed at providing team members with direct experience implementing their new knowledge and skills. Through a learning project, team members discover how new concepts work in the context of their situation, while simultaneously having a direct and tangible impact on the organization.

The documents below provide steps, tips, and a template for initiating a group learning project with your team, along with two project recommendations for this topic.

Download resources:

[Tips for Initiating and Supporting a Learning Project](#)

[Learning Project Plan Template](#)

[Learning Project: Improving Team Leadership Skills](#)

[Learning Project: Evaluating Team Performance](#)

Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams

[Lynda Gratton and Tamara J. Erickson. "Eight Ways to Build Collaborative Teams." *Harvard Business Review*, November 2007.](#)

[Download file](#)

Summary

Executing complex initiatives like acquisitions or an IT overhaul requires a breadth of knowledge that can be provided only by teams that are large, diverse, virtual, and composed of highly educated specialists. The irony is, those same characteristics have an alarming tendency to decrease collaboration on a team. What's a company to do? Gratton, a London Business School professor, and Erickson, president of the Concours Institute, studied 55 large teams and identified those with strong collaboration despite their complexity. Examining the team dynamics and environment at firms ranging from Royal Bank of Scotland to Nokia to Marriott, the authors isolated eight success factors: (1) "Signature" relationship practices that build bonds among the staff, in memorable ways that are particularly suited to a company's business; (2) Role models of collaboration among executives, which help cooperation trickle down to the staff; (3) The establishment of a "gift culture," in which managers support employees by mentoring them daily, instead of a transactional "tit-for-tat culture;" (4) Training in relationship skills, such as communication and conflict resolution; (5) A sense of community, which corporate HR can foster by sponsoring group activities; (6) Ambidextrous leadership, or leaders who are both task-oriented and relationship-oriented; (7) Good use of heritage relationships, by populating teams with members who know and trust one another; and (8) Role clarity and task ambiguity, achieved by defining individual roles sharply but giving teams latitude on approach. As teams have grown from a standard of 20 members to comprise 100 or more, team practices that once worked well no longer apply. The new complexity of teams requires companies to increase their capacity for collaboration by making long-term investments that build relationships and trust, and smart near-term decisions about how teams are formed and run.

Make Your Good Team Great

[Judith A. Ross. "Make Your Good Team Great." *Harvard Management Update*, December 2008.](#)

[Download file](#)

Summary

High-functioning teams are what make high-performing companies click. Whether the task is to create an innovative product or implement a new system, groups—not individuals—are shouldering the burden more than ever before. But what sets top teams apart? Research shows that high-performing teams achieve superior levels of participation, cooperation, and collaboration because their members trust one another and share a strong sense of identity. In short, these teams have high levels of group emotional intelligence, or EQ. Like individual EQ, group EQ has to do with an awareness of human emotions and the ability to handle them in healthy, productive ways. This article describes three practices to help you build your team's EQ: (1) Make time for team members to understand and appreciate each other's skills; (2) Establish positive, group-sanctioned ways to express negative feelings; and (3) Celebrate success—early and often.

Should This Team Be Saved?

Hollis Heimbouch, Marshall Goldsmith, Nancy Bologna, Martin Puris, and Jon R. Katzenbach. "Should This Team Be Saved?" *Harvard Business Review*, July 2001.

[Download file](#)

Summary

As far as anyone could tell, Vigor Skin Care's star was rising, mostly on the strength of Ageless Vigor, its new line of enriched skin cleansers and cosmetics. In fact, this evening, the three employees responsible for developing the product line were slated to receive the parent company's highest award for performance. But CEO Peter Markles knew that despite the accolades, the business unit—and its "fearsome threesome"—had hit a rough patch in recent months. When Peter took the reins four years ago, Vigor Skin Care was the sleeping dog of the health-and-beauty industry; his challenge was to rejuvenate the maturing business. He knew a turnaround would require equal parts discipline, politics, and creativity—so he pulled together a team that could address those needs. Their all-consuming, intensely collaborative efforts resulted in the successful Ageless Vigor line. Then reality set in. The team found the day-to-day operations of manufacturing Ageless Vigor a bit tedious. Peter felt relegated to troubleshooting distribution problems. Another team member was meeting with executives from another division who were actively recruiting the wunderkind. Another member was simply on the verge of burnout. Tonight, at the award ceremony, there would be speeches and applause and toasts. But tomorrow, Peter would have to face the question: Should he try to salvage the Ageless Vigor team?

Marshall Goldsmith, Nancy Bologna, Martin Puris, and John R. Katzenbach offer their advice on the problem presented in this fictional case study.